

DOMESTIC TERRORISM IN THE UNITED STATES
Ideology, Radicalization, Mobilization, and the Law

by
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Abstract

While the United States fought wars in the mountains and valleys of Afghanistan and in the cities and sands of Iraq, as a part of the Global War on Terrorism, it is “quite clear that domestic terrorists ... remain a clear and present danger here inside the US.”¹ Violent extremism is a major concern for law enforcement at all levels in the United States. Although much of the focus is currently on the international threat, domestic terrorists have committed the majority of the terrorist acts perpetrated in America since 9/11.² These attacks have come at the hands of different ideological factions: right-wing extremist, left-wing extremist, special-interest extremist, and lone wolf actors. The focus of this thesis is to analyze what motivates violent extremist to resort to domestic terrorism. It identifies if frustration with the United States government is an integral component in the radicalization to violence of these distinct extremist factions.

This thesis contends that the domestic terrorism threat in the United States is equally as significant as international terrorism, if not more, and the current domestic terrorism law is inadequate and requires repair. Additionally, it outlines actions that could enhance domestic counterterrorism efforts. Finally, the thesis concludes with a question for future consideration: Should the federal government establish a new agency that has the sole responsibility of domestic counterterrorism?

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¹ John P. Carlin, Remarks on Domestic Terrorism

² U.S. Government Accountability Office, "Countering Violent Extremism: Actions Needed to Define Strategy and Assess Progress of Federal Efforts", (U.S. Government Accountability Office, April 06, 2017), 3

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This process began in 2017 as an attempt to understand why the United States government labels some crimes as terrorism and charges other crimes as lesser offenses. Over the next two years, my research led me down several paths that illuminated the fact that the United States does not have an adequate statute for domestic terrorism. Dr. Jacob Straus, Dr. Elena Mastors, Dr. Alexander Rosenthal, and Dr. Dorothea Wolfson provided considerable insight and advice throughout the process.

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Introduction

Domestic terrorism is back with a vengeance.³ Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu used a similar statement in his book *Fighting Terrorism*. It is not a new concept in American history. Terrorism, particularly domestic terrorism, never left. More specifically, it has never left the United States. In the past, extremist movements were movements of dissatisfaction.⁴ They occurred in times of emerging transformation and targeted groups who believe they have been or soon will find themselves denied something of socio-economic value.⁵ The labor-related Molly Maguire murders of the late 1800s, anarcho-terrorists like Italian immigrant Luigi Galleani in the 1900s, and the violence of white supremacist groups like the Ku Klux Klan, which began in 1867, are just a few examples.⁶ The assassination of President Abraham Lincoln and the grander scheme to hurl the North into turmoil are also examples of why domestic terrorism is no stranger to American soil.⁷ The intent of these actions was to send a message. Terrorists use violence to instill fear in people with the aim of forcing change in law or procedure, maintaining the status quo, or reprisal for the government's refusal to comply with policy demands.⁸

In May 1980, Brian Michael Jenkins in the article *Terrorism in the United States* wrote that European officials were annoyed at the apparent negligence of the United

³ Benjamin Netanyahu, *Fighting Terrorism: How Democracies Can Defeat Domestic and International Terrorists*, (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1995), 3

⁴ Seymour Martin Lipset and Earl Raab, *The Politics of Unreason: Right Wing Extremism in America, 1790-1977* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 428

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Randall D. Law, *Terrorism: A History*, (Cambridge, Polity Press, 2016), 110-128

⁷ Ibid, 123

⁸ Netanyahu, *Fighting Terrorism*, 8

States government toward terrorism.⁹ Such perceived negligence could be attributed to statements similar to the one made by James B. Motley in his book *US Strategy to Counter Domestic Political Terrorism*. “In contrast with international terrorist incidents that have plagued Western Europe, the Middle East, and Latin America, few major spectacular incidents have occurred in the United States.”¹⁰ In 1983, Motley believed that instances of terrorism in the United States had not rivaled those transpiring in other countries, and to a degree, Americans had been able to overlook the problem.¹¹ Following the catastrophic international terrorist attack on September 11, 2001, Americans could no longer ignore terrorism.

However, the response to 9/11 effectively hijacked the entire terrorism discussion and the majority of the focus continues to be on international terrorism and foreign terrorist organizations (FTO). While that focus is necessary to prevent that type of attack from happening again, the data indicates that domestic terrorism has taken place in the United States for decades and is committed by ordinary, otherwise, law-abiding members of the general public.¹²

Prime Minister Netanyahu stated that, with the exception of the extreme lunatic radicals of humanity, it was extremely unlikely that anyone could convince Americans that committing random acts of violence against other Americans would be constructive to their cause.¹³ He believed that Americans possessed a philosophical immunization

⁹ Brian Michael Jenkins, *Terrorism in the United States*, (Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, 1980), 1

¹⁰ James Motley, *US Strategy to Counter Domestic Political Terrorism*, (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 1983), 14

¹¹ Motley, *US Strategy to Counter Domestic Political Terrorism*, 14

¹² Michael Ronczkowski, *Terrorism and Organized Hate Crime: Intelligence Gathering, Analysis, and Investigations*, (CRC Press, 2004), 31

¹³ Netanyahu, *Fighting Terrorism*, 12

against the outbreak of the terrorist infection – against the philosophies that drive terrorist.¹⁴ However, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Director Christopher Wray predicts that racial minorities, the federal government, and law enforcement will remain major targets for numerous domestic extremist movements.¹⁵

While not commonly acknowledged as such, domestic terrorist incidents do take place in America.¹⁶ Three hundred thirty-five terrorist acts occurred in the United States from 1980 to 2000, of which Americans committed nearly 75 percent.¹⁷ Examples include the Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh cult who contaminated salad bars in Oregon with salmonella in 1984 and various bombings and plots by the Jewish Defense League in New York and Atlanta in 1981.¹⁸ In October 1998, James Charles Koop shot and killed Dr. Barnett Slepian with a sniper rifle.¹⁹ Dr. Slepian was the provider at a women's clinic offering abortion services, with a sniper rifle.²⁰

Former Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation Louis J. Freeh stated that domestic terrorist organizations represent matters that cross the full range of economic, social, and political perspectives.²¹ Tendencies in these various movements shift, but the primary inspirations that lead to domestic extremism remain unvarying.²² These include but are not limited to socio-political conditions, law enforcement overreach, and retribution for legislative actions.²³ Unfortunately, there is an absence of synchronized

¹⁴ Netanyahu, *Fighting Terrorism*, 11

¹⁵ Christopher Wray, "Threats to the Homeland," FBI, October 10, 2018

¹⁶ Motley, *US Strategy to Counter Domestic Political Terrorism*, 14

¹⁷ Ronczkowski, *Terrorism and Organized Hate Crime*, 32

¹⁸ "FBI Portland History," FBI, May 26, 2016; "Jewish Defense League," Southern Poverty Law Center

¹⁹ "FBI Buffalo History," FBI, May 26, 2016

²⁰ Ibid

²¹ Ronczkowski, *Terrorism and Organized Hate Crime*, 29

²² Wray, "Threats to the Homeland"

²³ Ibid

and pinpointed intelligence accessible on domestic terrorist groups as it is tough to infiltrate these groups.²⁴ However, thanks to independent watchdog groups such as the Anti-Defamation League, Southern Poverty Law Center, the media, and academics, there is information on the ideologies that have resorted to violent extremism in the not too distant past.

The willingness to disregard the known intentions of violent extremist in lieu of mental health concerns is commonplace.²⁵ In many cases, the government and society writes off domestic terrorist groups as an assortment of extremists, complainers, radicals, fundamentalists, and hate groups.²⁶ Nevertheless, terrorists endeavor to either uphold the existing state of affairs or influence political change.²⁷ Using opportunistic violence, they strive to bring their objections to the consciousness of the people and hope to make good in positioning matters of political relevance, to them, on the mainstream agenda.²⁸

Considering the range of ideologies within the spectrum, it is logical to dedicate some space to outlining the elements of American violent domestic extremism. The FBI identifies violent extremism as “encouraging, condoning, justifying, or supporting the commission of a violent act to achieve political, ideological, religious, social, or economical goals.”²⁹ The U. S. Justice Department (DOJ) defines radicalization simply as “the process by which individuals enter into terrorism.”³⁰ Movements on the right are

²⁴ Ronczkowski, *Terrorism and Organized Hate Crime*, 28

²⁵ Law, *Terrorism: A History*, 330

²⁶ Ronczkowski, *Terrorism and Organized Hate Crime*, 29

²⁷ Erica Chenoweth, "Democratic Competition and Terrorist Activity," *The Journal of Politics* 72, no. 1 (2010), 20

²⁸ Ibid

²⁹ "What is Violent Extremism?" FBI

³⁰ Allison G. Smith, "How Radicalization to Terrorism Occurs in the United States: What Research Sponsored by the National Institute of Justice Tells Us", (*National Institute of Justice*, 2018), 1

those that have emerged for the most part in reaction against the displacing of status and power that comes with change.³¹ The movement on the left attempts to coerce societal change and endeavors to oust old privilege and topple status groups.³² Special interest or single issue extremist perpetrate “acts of politically motivated violence” to coerce the public to change viewpoints about matters believed significant to their individual movements.³³

After the September 11, 2001 attacks, the DOJ designated terrorism prevention its primary task.³⁴ In a statement on October 10, 2018 before the United States Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, FBI Director Wray stated, “The threat posed by terrorism ... has evolved significantly since 9/11.”³⁵ However, the United States engages with an adversary from within that has displayed success at acclimating to and thriving in the modern political environment.³⁶ This domestic antagonist is the unceasing rival of the US intelligence apparatus, and federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies. The enemy is the American domestic extremist. 18 U.S.C. Sec. 2331 (5) defines the term domestic terrorism as

activities that — involve acts dangerous to human life that are a violation of the criminal laws of the United States or of any State; appear to be intended—to intimidate or coerce a civilian population; to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion; or to affect the conduct of a government by mass destruction, assassination, or

³¹ Lipset, *The Politics of Unreason*, 3

³² Ibid

³³ Jerome P. Bjelopera, Domestic Terrorism: An Overview, 10

³⁴ Michael German and Sara Robinson, "Wrong Priorities on Fighting Terrorism," The Brennan Center for Justice, October 31, 2018, 1

³⁵ Wray, "Threats to the Homeland"

³⁶ Alexandra Sullivan, *Domestic Terrorism & the Lone Terrorist: The Greatest Threat to Homeland Security*, Thesis (M.A.)--Johns Hopkins University, 2009, 125

kidnapping; and occur primarily within the territorial jurisdiction of the United States.³⁷

Due to the persistent threats to the nation, the DOJ dedicates more assets to crimes with the terrorism label.³⁸ These crimes produce a shared injury beyond those wounds sustained by the direct victims.³⁹ They are also frequently, but not always, perpetrated by organized groups or factions that will remain a continuing threat after the attacker's incarceration.⁴⁰

This study addresses the history of domestic terrorism in the United States over the last 60 years. It describes the ideologies and motivations that lead to radicalization and ultimate recruitment in these domestic organizations. There is also analysis on the need for more attention on domestic terrorism and the need for a statute that adequately addresses the threat of domestic as a crime and not a philosophy. The literature review identifies the relevant violent extremist ideologies and the paths to radicalization for those ideologies. It also outlines pertinent concepts and theories regarding the focus on domestic terrorism in American in relation to the emphasis placed on international terrorism. The review concludes with a synopsis of the writings on the shortcomings of the federal domestic terrorism statute.

Staying in step with the diversity of America, the ideologies of domestic terrorists are incredibly wide-ranging. These differing ideologies, when put into violent

³⁷ "18 U.S.C. United States Code, 2009 Edition Title 18 - CRIMES AND CRIMINAL PROCEDURE PART I - CRIMES CHAPTER 113B - TERRORISM Sec. 2331 - Definitions," U.S. Government Publishing Office

³⁸ Wray, "Threats to the Homeland"; German, "Wrong Priorities on Fighting Terrorism", 11

³⁹ German, "Wrong Priorities on Fighting Terrorism", 11

⁴⁰ Ibid

action, have resulted in over 400 domestic terrorist acts or suspected acts between 1970 and 2015.⁴¹ Much terrorist behavior is a response to frustration with the political establishment. The ideologies associated with extremism are revolutionary socialist, anti-capitalism, reverence for individual liberties, white supremacy, anti-abortion, animal rights, earth rights, and anti-government.⁴² They are as differing as the groups that espouse them but the threats they pose to Americans are extraordinarily similar. Regardless of ideology, dissatisfaction with and antipathy toward the federal government on various issues are the tipping points that lead from peaceful protesting to extremist violence. These incidents included, but were not limited to, dissatisfaction over taxation, supposed implementation of hardline gun control regulations, legalization of abortion, and frustration with weaknesses in societal and political values regarding animal and environmental rights.⁴³ Chapter 1 will discuss the ideology of right wing violent extremism and the path to radicalization. Chapter 2 covers left wing movements. Chapter 3 examines special interest violent extremism and radicalization and Chapter 4 discuss lone wolf ideology.

Chapter 5 focuses on the need to increase the focus on domestic terrorism and the need for an adequate federal domestic terrorism statute. This is becoming more important as the United States encounters more violent incidents and threats of violence, executed by violent extremists. However, this is not a new idea. Representative Lee H. Hamilton wrote a newsletter to his constituents in 1995 while serving as the Chairman of the House Intelligence Committee stating, "We must take several steps to deal with the threat of

⁴¹ Number of attacks based on information found at <http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/>

⁴² "Ideological Motivations of Terrorism in the United States, 1970 -- 2016", November 2017, April 29, 2018, 6

⁴³ "TERRORISM in the United States 1999 - Welcome to FBI.gov", 31

domestic terrorism.”⁴⁴ Authorities say that threats presented by homegrown Islamic extremist, those Americans stirred by foreign terrorist organization to take violent actions inside the United States, are increasing.⁴⁵ However, the FBI reported that from 1980 – 2001, approximately two-thirds of terrorism in the United States was conducted by non-Islamic American extremist.⁴⁶ From 2002 – 2005, the number went up to 95 percent.⁴⁷ Yet, the FBI’s greatest concern is the threat from al-Qaeda attack cells.⁴⁸

The law concerning the crime of domestic terrorism, as presently written, is unsound and needs significant improvements. Terrorism is a crime and terrorists are criminals.⁴⁹ That domestic terrorist are criminals with political motivation is immaterial.⁵⁰ The conclusion to the thesis offers recommendations for those improvements. Those recommendations include instituting new and effective strategies that could have increased results for domestic terrorism deterrence and restructuring of counterterrorism resources through federal agencies and existing task forces. In addition, increased government accountability for protecting the entire population is essential. Additionally, this chapter will outline measures that the United States Congress could implement to enhance domestic counterterrorism efforts, including new legislation. Finally, the thesis will conclude with a question for future consideration: Should the federal government establish a new agency that has the sole responsibility of domestic counterterrorism?

⁴⁴ "Required Reading on Domestic Terrorism," Central Intelligence Agency

⁴⁵ Michael C. McGarrity, "Confronting White Supremacy," FBI, June 04, 2019; "Militant Extremists in the United States," Council on Foreign Relations

⁴⁶ "Militant Extremists in the United States," Council on Foreign Relations

⁴⁷ Ibid

⁴⁸ FBI Strategic plan, 26

⁴⁹ Netanyahu, *Fighting Terrorism*, 22

⁵⁰ Ibid, 23

Literature Review

Extremism. A leading anti-hate organization, The Anti-Defamation League classifies extremism as “a concept used to describe religious, social or political belief systems that exist substantially outside of” mainstream beliefs.⁵¹ The Government Accountability Office, frequently called Congress’ watchdog, defines violent extremism as acts of violence motivated by politics, ideology, or religion, committed in the United States by anti-government groups, white, supremacists, parties that subscribe to radical Islam, and other groups.⁵²

The University of Maryland Global Terrorism Database (GTD), an open-source database containing information on terrorist events around the world, defines a terrorist attack as the threatened or actual use of illegal force and violence by a non-state actor to attain a political, economic, religious, or social goal through fear, coercion, or intimidation.⁵³ Unique to the GTD definition are the use of six benchmarks to ascertain whether an act is included in the database.⁵⁴ Each of the first three specifications, that the act must “be intentional, include some level of violence or immediate threat of violence, and the perpetrators of the incident must be sub-national actors”, are required.⁵⁵ For inclusion, only two of the second three are required. “The act must be aimed at attaining a political, economic, religious or social goal; there must be evidence of an intention to

⁵¹ "Extremism", Anti-Defamation League

⁵² "U.S. GAO - About GAO - Overview," U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO)

⁵³ Gary Lafree, "Is Antifa a Terrorist Group?" *Society* 55, no. 3 (2018), 249

⁵⁴ Ibid

⁵⁵ Ibid, 250

coerce, intimidate, or convey some other message to a larger audience than the immediate victims; and the action must be outside the context of legitimate warfare activities.”⁵⁶

These definitions, along with the FBI definition previously mentioned, point to two elements that are integral to the violent extremist description. First, the perpetrator must hold extreme ideologies.⁵⁷ Second, an act of violence to spread these ideologies is required.⁵⁸ “Violent extremism—generally defined as supporting or committing violent acts to achieve political, ideological, religious, or social goals—has been perpetrated and promoted by a broad range of groups in the United States for decades.”⁵⁹ While not an absolute, “U.S.-based extremism has been closely linked to political and social forces that galvanize significant opposition movement—small elements of which resort to violence to express their discontent.”⁶⁰ Some traits of extremists include “character assassination, double standards, name calling and labeling, belief in conspiracy theories, a Manichean worldview, and an assumption of moral superiority.”⁶¹

Radicalization. The Oxford dictionary defines radicalization as the action or process of causing someone to adopt radical positions on political or social issues.⁶² Alex Wilner and Claire-Jehanne Dubouloz, in their interdisciplinary study titled “Homegrown Terrorism and Transformative Learning”, defined radicalization as “a personal process in which individuals adopt extreme political, social, and/or religious ideals and aspirations, and where the attainment of particular goals justifies the use of indiscriminate

⁵⁶ Lafree, “Is Antifa a Terrorist Group?”, 250

⁵⁷ Bjelopera, Domestic Terrorism: An Overview, 8

⁵⁸ Ibid

⁵⁹ U.S. Government Accountability Office, *Countering Violent Extremism, 1*

⁶⁰ *Terrorism in the United States 1999*, 31

⁶¹ Christopher Hewitt, *Understanding Terrorism in America: From the Klan to Al Qaeda*, (New York: Routledge, 2003), 20

⁶² “Radicalization | Definition of Radicalization in English by Oxford Dictionaries”

violence.”⁶³ While it is not an absolute guarantee, radicalism is frequently a forerunner of terrorism, and concentrating on radicalization is tantamount to thwarting terrorism at a premature point or at least developing a better understanding of it.⁶⁴

The path to radicalization has various routes that lead to unique outcomes and diametrically opposed ideological objectives. In spite of this, Christopher Hewitt, in *Understanding Terrorism in America: From the Klan to Al Qaeda*, wrote that radicalization can be tracked to a series of paths that morph grievances, real or otherwise, into extremist ideas and willingness to take part in political action beyond what is legally accepted.⁶⁵ He went on to state that while not all political or societal grievances morph into extremism, there are cases in which “individuals become terrorists because of anger at perceived mistreatment or injustice.”⁶⁶ To understand the domestic radicalization process, it would be wise to explore the process as it pertains to each of the various extremist ideologies.

Terrorism stems from numerous underlying dynamics that include religious, economic, sociological, and political factors.⁶⁷ Persons who decide to become a terrorist are inspired or influenced to embrace a turn to violence.⁶⁸ It would be unrealistic to portray terrorism as having a single motivating source.⁶⁹ For this reason, the Narcissistic Rage Hypothesis, a hypothesis that takes the slant that terrorists are mentally ill, namely

⁶³ Alex S. Wilner and Claire-Jehanne Dubouloz, "Homegrown Terrorism and Transformative Learning: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Understanding Radicalization", (*Global Change, Peace & Security*, 2010), 38

⁶⁴ Ömer Taşpınar, "Fighting Radicalism, Not 'Terrorism': Root Causes of an International Actor Redefined", (Brookings, July 28, 2016), 77

⁶⁵ Hewitt, *Understanding Terrorism in America*, 78

⁶⁶ Ibid, 78

⁶⁷ Rex A. Hudson, *Who Becomes a Terrorist and Why*, (Guilford, CT: Lyons Press, 2002), 23

⁶⁸ Ibid, 37

⁶⁹ Hudson, *Who Becomes a Terrorist and Why*, 23

having narcissistic personalities, fails to reflect the full scope of terrorism.⁷⁰ It is dubious and doubtful that a suicide bomber in Austin, Texas intentionally sacrificed himself in lieu of capture because he was a narcissist.⁷¹

Another hypothesis for why a person resorts to political terrorism is the Negative Identity Hypothesis.⁷² This hypothesis puts forth that the terrorist “consciously assumes a negative identity” and adopts a malicious denunciation of the roles most sought-after in society, after the individual has failed to achieve those roles.⁷³ In some instances, this hypothesis concurs with the hypothesis of government frustration, but the growing number of terrorists who are highly educated professionals such as engineers, chemists, and physicists negates negative identity.⁷⁴

Numerous studies also contend that when the government is run by those who are ideologically analogous to right-wing extremist, the amount of political terrorism is intensified because the conditions are believed to not only be tolerant but also emboldening.⁷⁵ Researchers observe that right-wing extremist even obtain “passive encouragement” when power is held by conservatives.⁷⁶

Right wing violent extremism. Right-wing extremism is an adherence to racial supremacy, anti-government, and anti-immigration principles.⁷⁷ Some right-wing extremists anticipate a racial holy war and refer to the United States government as the

⁷⁰ Hudson, *Who Becomes a Terrorist and Why*, 31

⁷¹ Ibid, 32

⁷² Ibid, 30

⁷³ Ibid

⁷⁴ Ibid, 32

⁷⁵ James A. Piazza, "The determinants of domestic right-wing terrorism in the USA: Economic grievance, societal change and political resentment", 2017, 58

⁷⁶ Ibid

⁷⁷ Ronczkowski, *Terrorism and Organized Hate Crime: Intelligence Gathering*, 27

Zionist Occupied Government, a federal government “controlled or manipulated by international Jewish interest.”⁷⁸ Within the right wing, extremist group is the Sovereign Citizens Movement. Sovereign Citizens believe they are not bound by any governmental power even though they live within the United States. They oppose paying taxes and do not recognize the authority of law enforcement agencies. Additionally, Sovereign Citizens group members are of all races.⁷⁹

Militias also potentially pose a domestic threat. In many instances militia groups believe that the government is illegitimate, a belief that is fueled by conspiracy theories and misinterpretations of the Constitution. These militia groups use those beliefs to justify the use of violence against the government and anyone who would support or defend it. With concerns about a change in the status quo or a federal government that was subject to foreign manipulation, militias act out of a belief that the government had grown contemptuous for the constitutional rights of Americans.⁸⁰ This form of right-wing extremism is based in the fear that the government plans to endorse extreme gun-control methods; either mandating all guns be registered or to prohibit ownership and seize all privately owned guns.⁸¹ “Right-wing terrorist ideology believes in racial and religious superiority of certain populations and supports wealth inequality and capitalism.”⁸²

Right wing radicalization. Right-wing extremist groups, as described by Michael Ronczkowski in *Terrorism and Organized Hate Crime: Intelligence Gathering*,

⁷⁸ Bjelopera, Domestic Terrorism: An Overview, 18

⁷⁹ Dean C. Alexander, "The Sovereign Citizen Movement: Threats and Responses", *Security*, 50

⁸⁰ Jack Levin, *Domestic Terrorism*, (New York: Chelsea House, 2006), 41

⁸¹ *Terrorism in the United States 1999*, 31

⁸² Kimberly Murray, "A comparative analysis of conviction outcomes of American domestic terrorists", *International Journal of Comparative and Applied Criminal Justice* 42, no. 1 (March 04, 2016), 80

Analysis, and Investigations, largely focus on antiregulatory and antigovernment principles (*although antigovernment ideologies are not exclusive to right-wing extremist*) and abide by the belief of white supremacy.⁸³ James Piazza concluded that three distinct conditions that instigate the radicalization to domestic terrorism. They are economic hardship, resentment toward the United States government, and social changes that resulted in women's empowerment and increased racial inclusion.⁸⁴ He outlined in "The determinants of domestic right-wing terrorism in the USA: Economic grievance, societal change and political resentment" that right-wing radicals are emboldened to the point where they see political violence as an appropriate method to communicate their dissidence.⁸⁵ They also hope to affect a broader audience or policy debate, drawing attention to their grievances, and the desire to "initiate a significant enough disruption to force the government into making compromises."⁸⁶

Jerome P. Bjelopera outlined in a report to the Congressional Research Service (*Domestic Terrorism: An Overview*) that because of the belief that so-called white male privilege is slipping away, white supremacist extremist groups believe that the white race has no other option but to wage war against non-whites.⁸⁷ The Department of Homeland Security Office of Intelligence and Analysis stated in an assessment that there is abhorrence for the government stemming from both the economic and political climate and this hate has been a factor in the increase in violent acts against government buildings and law enforcement officers.⁸⁸ The Office of Intelligence and Analysis

⁸³ Ronczkowski, *Terrorism and Organized Hate Crime*, 27

⁸⁴ Piazza, "The determinants of domestic right-wing terrorism in the USA", 52 & 54

⁸⁵ Ibid, 54

⁸⁶ Ibid

⁸⁷ Jerome P. Bjelopera, *Domestic Terrorism: An Overview*, (Congressional Research Service, 2017), 18

⁸⁸ Intelligence Resource Program, 2

maintained that right-wing extremist are also frustrated with the government over what they believe to be the lack of action regarding illegal immigration.⁸⁹ The assessment went on to mention that right-wing extremist also harbor hostilities regarding implementation of gun laws and regulations like the Brady Law, that requires a 5-day waiting period for handgun purchases, and the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, that limits the sale of certain types of assault rifles.⁹⁰

Left wing violent extremism. The fundamental premise held by all left-wing extremist groups is that the government, with the objective of preserving the existing state of affairs, oppresses the society. While right-wing extremist are currently the major threat and the leftist threat has decreased over the past decade, it has not completely ceased to exist.”⁹¹ There are remnants of leftist organizations like Weathermen, Armed Forces of National Liberation (FALN), and May 19th Communist Organization that remain in the country and champion the same ideology that resulted in the development of left-wing terrorism in the United States in the 1970s and 1980s.⁹² Left-wing extremism spread across college campuses and “the political issues that drove the student radicals were...the struggle for civil rights and opposition to the Vietnam War.”⁹³ Along with being anti-war, left-wing extremist were also opposed to the “military-industrial complex.”⁹⁴ They “have a revolutionary socialist agenda and present themselves as protectors of the populace against the alienating effects of capitalism and U.S.

⁸⁹ Intelligence Resource Program, 5

⁹⁰ Ibid

⁹¹ Karl A. Seger, “Left-Wing Extremism: The Current Threat”, (Apr. 2001), iii

⁹² Ibid

⁹³ Hewitt, *Understanding Terrorism in America*, 32

⁹⁴ *Terrorism in the United States 1999*, 31

imperialism.”⁹⁵ The intent of this type of extremism is to encouragement and promote revolution.⁹⁶ The groups had a “relatively small number of committed extremist whose objective was to overthrow the American government.”⁹⁷

Left wing radicalization. The website for The Centre for the Prevention of Radicalization Leading to Violence states that the central concerns leading to left-wing radicalization are issues relating to capitalism and political apparatuses that are the root causes of societal injustices.⁹⁸ The earliest American far-left extremists attempted to rebel against the capitalist structure that disenfranchised portions of the populace.⁹⁹ Race relations and economic matters, as described by Michael Jensen et al in their Final Report to the National Institute of Justice also drove them.¹⁰⁰ Hewitt asserts that the political matters that compelled the revolutionary left to radicalize in the 1960s and 1970s were the disapproval of and frustration with American involvement in the war in Vietnam and the fight for civil rights at home.¹⁰¹ Smith typifies far leftists are typified as possessing an extreme hatred for capitalism and racism and explicit hostility toward militarism.¹⁰² It was an attitude of revolution along with antigovernment views that Ronczkowski lists as the motivation for left-wing radicals resorting to extremist actions.¹⁰³

⁹⁵ Ronczkowski, *Terrorism and Organized Hate Crime*, 28

⁹⁶ Levin, *Domestic Terrorism*, 27

⁹⁷ Ibid, 27-28

⁹⁸ “Types of Radicalization”, (Info-radical.org. 2017)

⁹⁹ Michael Jensen, Gary LaFree, Patrick A. James, Anita Atwell-Seate, Daniela Psoiu, John Stevenson, and Herbert Tinsley, Final Report to the National Institute of Justice, (Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice, 2016), 10

¹⁰⁰ Ibid

¹⁰¹ Hewitt, *Understanding Terrorism in America*, 32

¹⁰² Smith, “How Radicalization to Terrorism Occurs in the United States”, 35

¹⁰³ Ronczkowski, *Terrorism and Organized Hate Crime*, 53

Special interest violent extremism. Special-interest terrorists groups focus on individual issues with specific ideology and believe they have no option but to use violence to support their position.¹⁰⁴ A key component for inclusion in the special-interest violent terrorist category is that they “seek to resolve specific issues rather than effect wide-spread change.”¹⁰⁵ “Acts directed against environmental pollution, animal abuse, genetic engineering, abortion, or particular company policies” are all considered to be special interest or single-issue terrorists.¹⁰⁶

For animal rights and environmental pollution groups, the primary use of violence is to cause destruction of property as the use of violence against humans is neither explicitly encouraged nor supported. “Animal rights extremists...generally adhere to (the) mandate not to harm “any animal, human and nonhuman. To date...other extremist environmental movements also have adhered to this approach.”¹⁰⁷ Referred to as Ecoterrorism, this “ideology supports animal rights and seeks to protect the world’s natural resource.”¹⁰⁸ Because of the sole objective of changing “one facet of the societal or civic arena through terrorism”, the FBI labels Ecoterrorism as special interest terrorism.¹⁰⁹

Anti-abortion groups, on the other hand, are special-interest terrorists that are in favor of using violence against those who are in any way involved in the abortion process. In conjunction with the anti-government movement, hardline anti-abortion

¹⁰⁴ Levin, *Domestic Terrorism*, 58

¹⁰⁵ Ronczkowski, *Terrorism and Organized Hate Crime*, 28

¹⁰⁶ Levin, *Domestic Terrorism*, 58

¹⁰⁷ *Terrorism in the United States 1999*, 31

¹⁰⁸ Murray, "A comparative analysis of conviction outcomes of American domestic terrorists", 80

¹⁰⁹ Murray, "A comparative analysis of conviction outcomes of American domestic terrorists", 78

extremists have found “a chance to actually stop abortion by blowing up clinics or even killing those who performed the abortions.”¹¹⁰ “Because of a wave of violence focused on abortion providers in the 1980s and early 1990s, Congress passed and President Clinton signed into law the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances Act (FACE Act) (18 U.S.C. §248) in 1994.”¹¹¹ The FACE Act prohibits activities that “by force or threat of force or by physical obstruction, intentionally injures, intimidates or interferes with or attempts to injure, intimidate or interfere with any person because that person is or has been ... obtaining or providing reproductive health services.”¹¹²

Special interest radicalization. Unlike right- and left-wing radicalization, Jensen asserts that special-interest radicals are not galvanized, not inspired by any singular event, and not influenced by any comprehensive ideology.¹¹³ Their dissatisfaction stems primarily from the slow results achieved by traditional protests or no action taken by the federal government. Executive Director Watson testified, “Special interest extremists ... conduct actions of politically motivated violence to force segments of society, including the general public, to change attitudes about issues considered important to their causes.”¹¹⁴ New arrivals to the pro-life movement “grew frustrated with what they perceived as incremental gains of the peaceful protest movement” according to Adam Louis Silverman in “An Exploratory Analysis of an Interdisciplinary Theory of Terrorism”.¹¹⁵ Randall D. Law, in *Terrorism: A History*, stated that those who resorted to

¹¹⁰ Joel Dyer, *Harvest of Rage: Why Oklahoma City is Only the Beginning*, 90

¹¹¹ Bjelopera, *Domestic Terrorism: An Overview*, 33

¹¹² “18 U.S.C. 248 - Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances.” U.S. Government Publishing Office

¹¹³ Jensen, *Final Report to the National Institute of Justice*, 10

¹¹⁴ Watson, “The Terrorist Threat Confronting the United States”

¹¹⁵ Adam Louis Silverman, “An Exploratory Analysis of an Interdisciplinary Theory of Terrorism”, (2002), 7

violence were not willing to wait for the United States Supreme Court to overturn the landmark case *Roe v Wade* and Jack Levin, *Domestic Terrorism*, mentioned that one of the latest attackers hoped to jar Americans out of their stupor and incite an uprising against the government.¹¹⁶ Sivan Hirsch-Hoefler and Cas Mudde collaborated for an article *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* that illuminated the fact that the founder of the Animal Liberation Front “was frustrated with the conventional forms of activism” and demanded “direct action against animal abuse.”¹¹⁷ They also illustrated the fact that even mainstream environmentalist became “fed up with the political system and believed that radical action was necessary to stop the environmental crisis.”¹¹⁸ Ecoterrorism, a definition in which Murray encompasses both Earth and animal rights, “occurs when government officials and/or political lobbies ignore or attempt to extinguish Earth and animal rights initiatives, which prompts deviant and often violent behavior from activists.”¹¹⁹

Lone Wolf Actors. American historian Walter Laqueur contends that terrorism has long been associated with the need for an organization that has structure, a hierarchy, and some form of group ideology or philosophy; otherwise the acts would be merely criminal in nature.¹²⁰ “In the past, terrorism was almost always the province of groups of militants that had the backing of political forces.”¹²¹ In recent years, the concept of the lone wolf terrorist—an individual acting alone to carry out his own ideology—has

¹¹⁶ Law, *Terrorism: A History*, 62; Levin, *Domestic Terrorism*, 313

¹¹⁷ Sivan Hirsch-Hoefler and Cas Mudde, ““Ecoterrorism”: Terrorist Threat or Political Ploy?” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, (2014), 590

¹¹⁸ Ibid

¹¹⁹ Murray, “A comparative analysis of conviction outcomes of American domestic terrorists”, 77

¹²⁰ Walter Laqueur, “Postmodern Terrorism.” *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 75, no. 5, 1996, 34

¹²¹ Laqueur, “Postmodern Terrorism”, 34

become more accepted and more prevalent. Before moving any further, it is important to establish that the lone wolf is not a cause but instead a method to carry out domestic terrorism. “In the future, terrorists will be individuals or like-minded people working in very small groups.”¹²² The self-styled “lone wolf”, executing attacks by individuals and small, unidentified groups, has remained the root of far-right violence.¹²³ They derive ideological influence from far-right groups without being members or carrying out attacks on their behalf.¹²⁴ Unlike many other countries, individuals who are not associated with extremist groups have carried out considerable amounts of terrorist acts in America.¹²⁵ They also are inclined to merge personal infringements with political grievances and set out to harm a particular race, gender, sexual identity/preference, or religion.¹²⁶

Numerous terrorism experts and law enforcement officials believe that these outsiders will pose the biggest threat to American security because they are difficult to identify before they take action and hard to apprehend afterwards.¹²⁷ Terrorists working by themselves or in small cells will present greater difficulties for law enforcement or counterterrorism with detection unless they make a major strategic error or expose themselves by mistake.¹²⁸ Their modus operandi is that they usually do not have an established leader, they act alone, and they will disappear after committing the violent

¹²² Laqueur, “Postmodern Terrorism”, 34

¹²³ Law, *Terrorism: A History*, 311

¹²⁴ Ibid

¹²⁵ Hewitt, *Understanding Terrorism in America*, 78

¹²⁶ Mark Hamm and Roman Spaaj, "National Criminal Justice Reference Service | NCJRS", National Criminal Justice Reference Service (NCJRS), February 2015, 7; Law, *Terrorism: A History*, (Cambridge, MA: Polity Press, 2016), 311

¹²⁷ Hewitt, *Understanding Terrorism in America*, 79

¹²⁸ Laqueur, “Postmodern Terrorism.”, 34

act.¹²⁹ This dynamic has risen significantly in recent decades and a lion's share of the “freelancers have been right-wing racists.”¹³⁰ The literature indicates that the lone wolf is not at all limited to any singular aspect of domestic terrorism and has been an actor in every form of violent extremism seen in the United States for over 50 years.

Lone wolf radicalization. Similar to special-interest radicalization, lone wolf radicalization has no specific triggering event or a singular ideology. This form of radicalization, according to Mark Hamm and Roman Spaaij (“National Criminal Justice Reference Service”), originates with personal and political disputes and is probably driven or inspired by a larger political movement, as discussed by Jeff Gruenewald et al in “Far-Right Lone Wolf Homicides in the United States”.¹³¹ Lone wolves derive a form of fuel and fire from these movements that leads, more and more, to lone wolf actors cropping up to engage in violence.¹³² Many actors either sympathized with or were previously members of extremist organizations.¹³³ Gruenewald goes on to describe an attacker who was motivated by the need to retaliate for perceived offenses against the white race and the desire to agitate others to partake in a race war.¹³⁴ Douglas Kellner (*Guys and Guns Amok*) expresses that the sentiment of a radicalized lone wolf is “in order to get our message before the public with some chance of making a lasting impression, we’ve had to kill people.”¹³⁵ In another group effort by Spaaij and Hamm

¹²⁹ Ronczkowski, *Terrorism and Organized Hate Crime*, 233

¹³⁰ Hewitt, *Understanding Terrorism in America*, 79

¹³¹ Hamm, “National Criminal Justice Reference Service”, (2015), 10; Jeff Gruenewald, Steven Chermak, and Joshua D. Freilich, “Far-Right Lone Wolf Homicides in the United States” *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 36, (2013), 1006

¹³² Gruenewald, “Far-Right Lone Wolf Homicides in the United States”, 1010

¹³³ Ibid

¹³⁴ Gruenewald, “Far-Right Lone Wolf Homicides in the United States”, 1010

¹³⁵ Douglas Kellner, *Guys and Guns Amok Domestic Terrorism and School Shootings from the Oklahoma City Bombing to the Virginia Tech Massacre*, (Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2013), 113

(“Endgame?”), they contend, “by turning political causes into violent action, lone wolf terrorists can become role models for others who are sympathetic to those causes.”¹³⁶

Increased attention. A common concept in the literature is that there needs to be more attention devoted to domestic terrorism. A 2017 report by the United States Government Accountability Office (GAO), the agency that provides research, analytical, and exploratory services to the US Congress, indicated that the federal government does not have an organized approach or procedure for evaluating the entire countering violent extremism (CVE) effort.¹³⁷ The same report also revealed that data compiled from the US Extremist Crime Database ECDB shows that from September 12, 2001 to December 31, 2006, incidents in the United States by domestic or homegrown extremist resulted in 225 deaths.¹³⁸ During the same time, the ECDB indicates that no fatalities resulted from left-wing violent extremist group activities.

Michael German and Sara Robinson, in "Wrong Priorities on Fighting Terrorism", an article published by the Brennan Center for Justice assert that the Justice Department does not handle all terrorism with equal resolve.¹³⁹ They go on to mention that there are longstanding complaints that the Department of Justice does not consider domestic terrorism implicating racist, homophobic, anti-Semitic, and xenophobic violence as a national security matter on the same level as acts of terrorism perpetrated by Muslims.¹⁴⁰ The same article highlights then-assistant Attorney General for National Security John

¹³⁶ Ramon Spaaij and Mark S. Hamm, "Endgame? Sports Events as Symbolic Targets in Lone Wolf Terrorism", *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 1034

¹³⁷ United States, Government Accountability Office, *Countering Violent Extremism*, introduction page

¹³⁸ Ibid, 3

¹³⁹ German, "Wrong Priorities on Fighting Terrorism", 1

¹⁴⁰ Ibid

Carlin expressing that there is an absence of “tools and structures” on hand for deterrence and responsibility in domestic cases juxtapose international terrorism.¹⁴¹ Former Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General for National Security at the U.S. Department of Justice and federal prosecutor Mary McCord wrote in "It's Time for Congress to Make Domestic Terrorism a Federal Crime" that there is no doubt that since 9/11 more federal resources go to combating the threat of international terrorism than preventing domestic terrorism.¹⁴² She also cites data from the same GAO report mentioned earlier that reveals that, post-9/11, terrorist incidents causing death in the United State happen far more often because of domestic terrorism than international terrorism.¹⁴³

Federal Statute. Regarding the shortfall of the current domestic terrorism statute, the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) published an article, “Militant Extremists in the United States”, contending that some leading figures in the field disapprove of the dissimilarities in the way the United States applies domestic terrorism laws, resulting in different processes and consequences for comparable cases.¹⁴⁴ In "The Ad Hoc Federal Crime of Terrorism: Why Congress Needs to Amend the Statute to Adequately Address Domestic Extremism", published in the St. John’s Law Review, Nathan Carpenter directly states “Federal terrorism law does not adequately address the threat posed by domestic terrorism.”¹⁴⁵ Similar to the CFR article, Carpenter draws the conclusion that the current statute fashions subjective lines that disregard some acts and considers others

¹⁴¹ German, "Wrong Priorities on Fighting Terrorism", 5

¹⁴² Mary B. McCord, "It's Time for Congress to Make Domestic Terrorism a Federal Crime," Lawfare, (December 10, 2018)

¹⁴³ Ibid

¹⁴⁴ "Militant Extremists in the United States," Council on Foreign Relations

¹⁴⁵ Nathan Carpenter, "The Ad Hoc Federal Crime of Terrorism: Why Congress Needs to Amend the Statute to Adequately Address Domestic Extremism," St. John's Law Scholarship Repository, 417

devoid of a focus on the objective of the alleged perpetrator.¹⁴⁶ He continues by adding that, under current federal law, there is explicit charge of terrorism.¹⁴⁷ Thomas Brzozowski, domestic terrorism attorney at the Department of Justice, maintained that the absence of a federal statute “sows confusion” and that an offense of domestic terrorism would aid in constructing a shared vocabulary.”¹⁴⁸ Several law enforcement agencies, similar to the FBI, apply the tags domestic terrorism and violent extremism synonymously.¹⁴⁹

Jessie J. Norris adds to the discussion that use of the term terrorism must be uniform.¹⁵⁰ In “Why Dylann Roof Is a Terrorist under Federal Law, and Why It Matters”, Norris argues that all ideologically motivated violence against persons, especially murder and attempted murder, should be treated as terrorism for all “legal, policy, and publicity purposes.”¹⁵¹

Data and Methodology

As the literature review outlined, the basic types of domestic terrorist groups are central to the research question. Searches using the primary themes of right-wing extremism, left-wing extremism, special-interest extremism, and lone wolf actors led to peer-reviewed literature, cited sources in verified literature, congressional reports, post-

¹⁴⁶ Carpenter, "The Ad Hoc Federal Crime of Terrorism", 417

¹⁴⁷ Ibid, 394

¹⁴⁸ German, "Wrong Priorities on Fighting Terrorism", 5

¹⁴⁹ "Militant Extremists in the United States," Council on Foreign Relations

¹⁵⁰ Jesse J. Norris, “Why Dylann Roof is a Terrorist under federal law, and why it matters”, Harvard Journal on Legislation, 506

¹⁵¹ Ibid

conviction news reports, Federal Bureau of Investigation archives, and think-tank findings.

The literature review and analysis for this thesis were established using verifiable literature and data obtained from several domestic and international terrorism data collection sites. The groups or lone wolf actors designated as case studies are the most prominent for the categories outlined and are relevant in demonstrating the various ideological motivations these groups use to justify launching monstrous attacks against their fellow Americans.

Research conducted on ideological-based domestic extremist from terrorism databases, official sources such as reports and testimony to Congress, and documents generated by federal agencies including the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Department of Homeland Security produced data on several groups. Those groups are right wing, left wing, special interest, and lone wolf actors. The Southern Poverty Law Center was also a source of comprehensive data. The nature of combative political environments, as determined by election cycle violence, also served as a variable.

Case studies were constructed that focused on backgrounds, ideologies, frustrations, and radicalization to violence based on a qualitative, exploratory approach to the evidence. The cases chosen met the academic requirement. Ultimately, the pursuit was to discover what or who were the causes of frustration. Examination of motives of the case studies aided in achieving this goal. Manifestos, news interviews, literature produced by the groups, court records, and testimony transcripts offered an unaltered account of these motivations. This allowed the research to view the path of radicalization to violence in reverse: aftermath, attack, radicalization, frustration.

Additional case studies were compiled using data from various Executive Branch and Congressional reports. Data from Central Intelligence Agency archive documents, advocacy groups, indictments, and other court and Department of Justice allowed for investigation into the existing federal criminal statute of domestic terrorism and the different prosecutorial outcomes.

Chapter 1

Right-Wing Violent Extremists

A 2012 study released by the United States Military Academy's Combating Terrorism Center detected a distinct development in right wing violent extremism. There was a clear increase in the number of attacks from the early 1990s through 2008.¹⁵² The criteria for this classification were that the violent attacks (1) "were perpetrated by groups or individuals affiliated with far-right associations; and/or (2) were intended to promote ideas compatible with far-right ideology."¹⁵³ Advocating racial supremacy and opposition to the federal government, right-wing extremist organizations include White Supremacist groups, the Militia Movement, and the Sovereign Citizens Movement.¹⁵⁴

Some of the more radical White Supremacist extremists include The Covenant, the Sword, and the Arm of the Lord, the World Church of the Creator, and White Aryan Resistance.¹⁵⁵ By nature, white supremacists groups believe in the inherent superiority of their race over others and in the "necessity and desirability" of war in order to achieve their destiny.¹⁵⁶ These groups generally define destiny through the lens that America is the land promised to the Aryans by God, they have divided the world between white people, and the rest are viewed as enemies while a "particular animus is directed toward Jews and African Americans."¹⁵⁷ There is also focus on perceived U.S. job losses in the

¹⁵² Arie Perliger, "Challengers from the Sidelines: Understanding America's Violent Far-Right", (November 2012), 87

¹⁵³ Charles Kurzman, "Law Enforcement Assessment of the Violent Extremism Threat", 8

¹⁵⁴ *Terrorism in the United States 1999*, 29-30

¹⁵⁵ Law, *Terrorism: A History*, 307

¹⁵⁶ Brent L. Smith, *Terrorism in America: Pipe Bombs and Pipe Dreams*, (Albany, N.Y: State University New York Press, 1994), 35

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid*, 17

blue-collar sector and these losses result from “a deliberate conspiracy conducted by a cabal of Jewish ‘financial elites.’”¹⁵⁸ White supremacist extremists hold firm to the concept that there are hostile conspiracies directed at them that shape the existing world.¹⁵⁹ They believe they have lost “ground to other groups and ... extreme measures are required to reverse the trend.”¹⁶⁰

An example is Dylan Roof’s mass shooting in an African American church in Charleston, South Carolina on June 17, 2015.¹⁶¹ White supremacists were to blame for the vast majority of extremist-related murders in 2018, which is the case nearly every year.¹⁶² Of the 50 domestic extremist-related murders recorded in 2018, white supremacists were responsible for 39.¹⁶³ Even though white supremacist violence is for the most part group-based, the fundamental goal of Dylann Roof’s actions was the same: to bring back absolute white supremacy by way of violence.¹⁶⁴ On June 17, 2015, Roof, a 21-year old white man, shot and killed nine African-American parishioners attending bible study at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina.¹⁶⁵ He wounded three others and deliberately left one survivor to describe the ordeal.¹⁶⁶ Roof entered the church with his model 41 .45 caliber Glock pistol and eight magazines loaded with hollow-point ammunition with the goal of killing African-

¹⁵⁸ Intelligence Resource Program, 3

¹⁵⁹ Bjelopera, Domestic Terrorism: An Overview, 17

¹⁶⁰ Ibid

¹⁶¹ Jelani Cobb, "Inside the Trial of Dylann Roof", The New Yorker, August 17, 2017, 22

¹⁶² "Extremism", Anti-Defamation League, 14

¹⁶³ Ibid

¹⁶⁴ Norris, “Why Dylann Roof is a Terrorist under federal law, and why it matters”, 515

¹⁶⁵ Ibid, 502

¹⁶⁶ Cobb, "Inside the Trial of Dylann Roof", 22

Americans.¹⁶⁷ The seventh deadliest act of violence by U.S. domestic extremists from 1966 to 2018 is Roof's attack on "Mother Emanuel" Church.¹⁶⁸

Roof was not a member of any specific white supremacist organization but he did divulge to authorities that he envisioned his actions would incite a "race war."¹⁶⁹ "Race war" denotes a violent white supremacist rebellion, which the most notable characteristic being interracial clashes, for the most part white people killing blacks.¹⁷⁰ He made his personal ideology and inspiration clear in a manifesto he uploaded before the Charleston church shooting declaring allegiance to and drawing motivation from the Council of Conservative Citizen, a white nationalism group.¹⁷¹

In the manuscript, Roof blamed black people for taking over "our country" and "raping our women."¹⁷² This suggests that the motivation for his act was the want to frighten blacks from having sway in American society and from perpetrating crimes, actual or those perceived by Roof, against white people.¹⁷³ This is a cornerstone of white supremacist ideology. He also wrote that "we have no skinheads, no real KKK, no one doing anything but talking on the internet. Well someone has to have the bravery to take it to the real world, and I guess that has to be me."¹⁷⁴ Roof chose Emanuel AME as his

¹⁶⁷ UNITED STATES OF AMERICA v. DYLANN STORM ROOF (Indictment) (DISTRICT OF SOUTH CAROLINA CHARLESTON DIVISION July 20, 2015).

¹⁶⁸ "Extremism", Anti-Defamation League, 25

¹⁶⁹ Norris, "Why Dylann Roof is a Terrorist under federal law, and why it matters", 503

¹⁷⁰ Ibid, 519

¹⁷¹ "Terror from the Right." Southern Poverty Law Center

¹⁷² Norris, "Why Dylann Roof is a Terrorist under federal law, and why it matters", 516

¹⁷³ Ibid

¹⁷⁴ Ibid, 517

because of the predominately African-American worshipers and the important role of the church in Charleston and the country.¹⁷⁵

The federal grand jury for the District of South Carolina indicted Roof on 33 charges including federal hate crimes, firearms charges, and obstruction of religious exercise.¹⁷⁶ In an attachment to the indictment, Attorney General Loretta F. Lynch certified that, in her judgment, prosecution by the United States of Dylann Roof for violating Title 18, United States Code, § 249(a)(1), was in the public interest and was necessary to secure substantial justice and that the state lacked jurisdiction to bring a hate crime prosecution.¹⁷⁷ On December 15, 2016, a federal jury convicted Roof on all 33 counts and on January 10, 2017, the same jury sentenced him to death on January.¹⁷⁸ Roof is currently awaiting execution on federal death row at the United States Penitentiary in Terre Haute, Indiana.

Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas stated that the Ku Klux Klan (KKK), one of the oldest white-supremacist organizations in the United States, was “a terrorist organization which ... uses the most brutal methods.”¹⁷⁹ The over-all objective of the Klan was to restore white supremacy through violence.¹⁸⁰ The issue here is what draws Americans into the type of organizations that lash out violently against other Americans and the government.

¹⁷⁵ UNITED STATES OF AMERICA v. DYLANN STORM ROOF (Indictment)

¹⁷⁶ Ibid

¹⁷⁷ Ibid

¹⁷⁸ "Federal Jury Sentences Dylann Storm Roof to Death", The United States Department of Justice, (January 26, 2017)

¹⁷⁹ Norris, "Why Dylann Roof is a Terrorist under federal law, and why it matters", 514 - 515

¹⁸⁰ Ibid, 515

Among right wing radicals are those who “first affiliate with right-wing activities and only then begin altering their intellectual outlooks to sustain and strengthen those ties.”¹⁸¹ This affiliation can be fixed to a sense of relative deprivation, a theory that suggests that individuals feel robbed of what they understand as status or standing to which they are inherently deserving.¹⁸² It is due to the lack of this standing that they form gripes against the government for causing perceived injustices, discrimination, and unemployment.¹⁸³ Violence then becomes an unorthodox link to bridge the chasm between the ambitions of status and stature and the capacity to attain them.¹⁸⁴

The growth of the radical right and the issues that are the cause of the growth are economic difficulties, changes in the structure of society, and antipathy directed at the United States government.¹⁸⁵ At the center of the radical right is the Patriot Movement or Christian Patriotism.¹⁸⁶ This movement is antigovernment and sees the administration as their main adversary.¹⁸⁷ The Patriot Movement formed initially as a response to the “violent government repression at Ruby Ridge, Idaho and Waco, Texas”, out of anger over gun control, and frustration with the over-all nature of the Clinton Administration in the 1990s.¹⁸⁸

The issues of financial destitution and economic difficulties are propaganda for the Patriotism Movement to target impoverishment white communities.¹⁸⁹ It also

¹⁸¹ Hewitt, *Understanding Terrorism in America*, 77

¹⁸² Hamm, "National Criminal Justice Reference Service", 7

¹⁸³ Ibid

¹⁸⁴ Ibid

¹⁸⁵ Piazza, "The determinants of domestic right-wing terrorism in the USA", 54

¹⁸⁶ Mark Potok, "THE YEAR IN HATE & EXTREMISM", *Intelligence Report*

¹⁸⁷ Ibid

¹⁸⁸ Ibid

¹⁸⁹ Ibid

condemns government policies, liberals, and the empowerment women for the loss of employment and the lack of wealth and affluence.¹⁹⁰ Individual financial predicaments work to isolate people from normal society and, in so doing, assists in the radicalization process.¹⁹¹ An example of this is the financial crisis of 2008 and the rage over the auto industry and bank bailouts.¹⁹² Because of these events, the radicalized right sought “to exact revenge against racial and ideological enemies that they hold responsible for their economic difficulties.”¹⁹³

Social change is an integral component of radicalization on the right. This change is symptomatic of a “decline of white male privilege.”¹⁹⁴ The supplanting of the supremacy of “white, Christian males” and the losing of their country leads many white men to join Patriot groups.¹⁹⁵ “Political violence perpetrated by white males ... is motivated by a competitive backlash against the gains made by non-white segments of society.”¹⁹⁶ A 2011 study determined that white Americans believe that progress in race relations over a 60-year span has come at their detriment.¹⁹⁷ They also think that the prejudice against them is more problematic than that experienced by black Americans in the last 10 years.¹⁹⁸ The election of Barack Obama underpins the right-wing account of misfortune of white Americans because of ethnic inclusiveness.¹⁹⁹ The President of the United States is the most noticeable political figure in the country and when a

¹⁹⁰ Piazza, "The determinants of domestic right-wing terrorism in the USA", 54

¹⁹¹ Ibid

¹⁹² Potok, "THE YEAR IN HATE & EXTREMISM", *Intelligence Report*

¹⁹³ Piazza, "The determinants of domestic right-wing terrorism in the USA", 56

¹⁹⁴ Ibid, 56

¹⁹⁵ Piazza, "The determinants of domestic right-wing terrorism in the USA", 56; Potok, "THE YEAR IN HATE & EXTREMISM", *Intelligence Report*

¹⁹⁶ Piazza, "The determinants of domestic right-wing terrorism in the USA", 56

¹⁹⁷ Potok, "THE YEAR IN HATE & EXTREMISM", *Intelligence Report*

¹⁹⁸ Ibid

¹⁹⁹ Piazza, "The determinants of domestic right-wing terrorism in the USA", 56

philosophical adversary of violent right-wing extremists occupies that office, it provokes violent actions.²⁰⁰

In addition, fundamental to right-wing radicalization is political antipathy. Right-wing extremists feel estranged from conventional politics.²⁰¹ Similar to mainstream, right-wing conservatives, right-wing extremists believe that the federal government is too big, too powerful, and is engaged in an onslaught on individual liberties.²⁰² A major dissimilarity that radicals contend is that “mainstream politics and politicians are unaccountable and tyrannical.”²⁰³ The rise of the Patriot Movement and the hostilities toward the government initially coincided with the liberal agenda of President Bill Clinton.²⁰⁴ This agenda included gun control measures that required background checks for all purchases and banned all semi-automatic assault rifles.²⁰⁵ “Patriots” dispute all gun control measures and view them as an assault on the Second Amendment right to keep and bear arms.²⁰⁶ Other perceived assaults on citizen’s rights came in the form of excessive taxation and abusive regulatory policies.²⁰⁷

As mentioned earlier, domestic terrorism is not a new concept in American society and neither is right-wing violent extremism manifested in the form of white supremacy. White supremacy denotes numerous horrifying and terrible features, such as vigilantism, disenfranchisement, and marginalization. Its organization fixes itself around

²⁰⁰ Piazza, "The determinants of domestic right-wing terrorism in the USA", 70

²⁰¹ Ibid, 58

²⁰² Ibid

²⁰³ Ibid

²⁰⁴ *Patriot Games - The Rise of the US Militia Movement*, (Intelligence Review, April 30, 2013)

²⁰⁵ Ibid

²⁰⁶ Ibid

²⁰⁷ Piazza, "The determinants of domestic right-wing terrorism in the USA", 58

a fear of its own ruin and its advocates are post-civil rights contemporaries that envisions themselves as casualties of an overreaching government.

In the case of Dylann Roof, raised in a hotbed of racism, his anti-government, anti-liberal radicalization found nurturing online instead of the traditional methods of in the home, schools, churches, and other local meeting places. The online propaganda drew him in during a time and in an atmosphere where it was difficult for him to find anything of substance to have faith in. This modern indoctrination and radicalization allows for the implementation of the leaderless resistance philosophy, offering sociopolitical foundation and practical inspiration to trigger an insurrectionist “race war” but could not be tracked to any groups without difficulty.

Roof had no handler or direct group membership. What Roof was, however, was the genuine successor of a resurfacing social crusade. He was so genuine that his punishment made him the first person in American history sentenced to death for a hate crime. This may very well be representative of an impending storm coming from the right.

Right-wing extremist radicalize to violence against the government when they feel that the government is infringing upon their rights. This was not always the case. In the past, the KKK targeted minority groups but attacks on the government apparatus is a more modern phenomenon. The Patriotism Movement not only violently advocates for the rights granted by the Constitution but also the rights granted to them by simply being white in America. The rights that are commonly associated with white-privilege lead to relative deprivation when economic issues and societal changes occur. The Patriotism Movement frequently blame the government for these occurrences along with the

empowerment of women and the rise in affluence of minorities. Hillary Clinton and both Barrack and Michelle Obama are prime examples of what the Patriotism Movement views as the loss of real American culture.

With the exception of 1996, there has been an upsurge in right wing violence in each presidential election year and the preceding year.²⁰⁸ The 1999-2000 increase was almost 70 percent higher than the violence that occurred in 1998.²⁰⁹ For 2003-2004, the increase was more than 300 percent of the number of recorded attacks in 2002 and the 2007-2008 increase was 100 percent from 2006.²¹⁰ A major difference between the 1996 election and the other elections is that this election was the least competitive over the 20-year period from 1992 to 2012.²¹¹

Figure 1 shows the difference in right-wing attacks over a 22-year span from 1996 to 2017. The aftermath of the McVeigh attack in 1995 witnessed a decline in attacks. However, in five of eight years of the Obama Administration, the United States experienced a higher number of attacks than each of the previous years. The number of right-wing attacks were also higher in the first year of the Donald Trump presidency than the year before. One recent attack that fits the right wing ideology occurred in Pittsburg, PA. According to the January 29, 2019 indictment, on October 27, 2018, Robert Bowers entered the Tree of Life Synagogue carrying several firearms.²¹² He allegedly opened fire, killing worshipers, in addition to injuring many others including police officers who

²⁰⁸ Arie Perliger, "Challengers from the Sidelines: Understanding America's Violent Far-Right", (November 2012), 88

²⁰⁹ Ibid, 87

²¹⁰ Ibid

²¹¹ Ibid

²¹² "Additional Charges Filed in Tree of Life Synagogue Shooting." The United States Department of Justice

responded.²¹³ The indictment also alleges that nearly two weeks before the attack, Bowers made online posts that were critical of the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS).²¹⁴ Moreover, on the day of the attack, he posted “HIAS likes to bring invaders in that kill our people. I can’t sit by and watch my people get slaughtered. Screw your optics, I’m going in.”²¹⁵ The indictment contains sixty-three charges including eleven counts of obstruction of free exercise of religious beliefs resulting in death, eleven counts of hate crimes resulting in death, two counts of hate crimes involving an attempt to kill, and twenty-five counts of discharge of a firearm during these crimes of violence.²¹⁶

This validates the belief that far-right extremist are prone to take part in political violence in a contentious political environment.²¹⁷ However, actual or imaginary threats to a group’s philosophical norms are catalysts of violence as indicated by the early years of the Clinton Administration (prior to the McVeigh attack) and most of the Obama years.²¹⁸

²¹³ “Additional Charges Filed in Tree of Life Synagogue Shooting.”

²¹⁴ Ibid

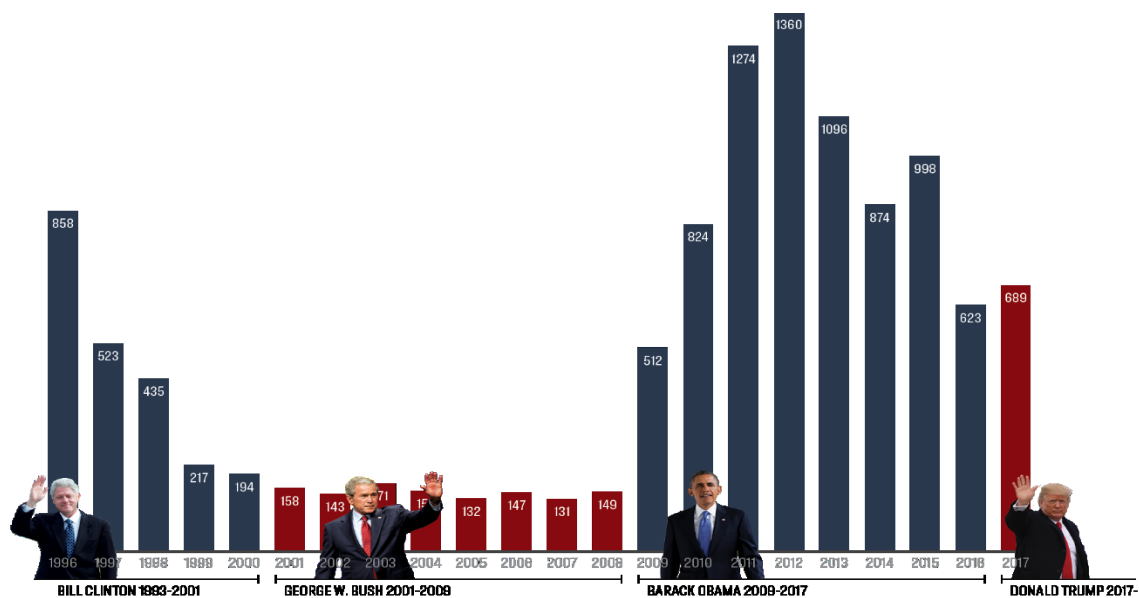
²¹⁵ Ibid

²¹⁶ Ibid

²¹⁷ Perliger, "Challengers from the Sidelines", 88

²¹⁸ Ibid

Figure 1. Number of antigovernment Patriotism groups from 1996-2017.²¹⁹



²¹⁹ "Antigovernment Movement", Southern Poverty Law Center

Chapter 2

Left-Wing Violent Extremists

Revolutionary terrorism “peaked in the United States during the 1960s and 1970s, when radical youth seemed to dominate the margins of the political scene.”²²⁰ These youth formed the New Left in the 1960s and focused on matters of personal freedom and justice.²²¹ These issues included women’s rights, civil rights, and the “anger over a supposedly imperialistic war in Vietnam and the highly unpopular draft.”²²² Initially the focal point for the New Left’s issues was the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), an organization created on the campus of colleges and universities in the ‘60s to campaign for social change.²²³

In 1970, Weathermen unleashed a crusade of terrorism they referred to as “strategic armed chaos” designed to provoke “mass public action” against bourgeois democracy and capitalism.²²⁴ Beginning in March of the same year, they began a series of bombings that included the New York City Police headquarters, National Guard headquarters in Washington, D.C., The Presidio of San Francisco, an Army research facility in Madison, Wisconsin, the U.S. Capitol Senate wing, and the Air Force wing in the Pentagon.²²⁵ These attacks resulted in very few casualties but massive property damage.²²⁶

²²⁰ Levin, *Domestic Terrorism*, 27

²²¹ Law, *Terrorism: A History*, 254

²²² Ibid

²²³ Law, *Terrorism: A History*, 254; "Weather Underground Bombings," FBI, May 18, 2016

²²⁴ Law, *Terrorism: A History*, 255

²²⁵ Ibid, 256

²²⁶ Ibid

One anti-government attack perpetrated by the Weather Underground was a bombing of the United States State Department Headquarters in Washington, D.C.²²⁷ An explosion rocked the building on January 29, 1975, causing massive damage to 20 floors.²²⁸ The Weather Underground placed a 12-page letter in a telephone booth claiming responsibility for the bombing and listing their reasons why.²²⁹

We made the choice to become a guerrilla organization at a time when the Vietnamese were fighting a heroic people's war, defeating half a million U.S. troops and the most technologically advanced military power. In our own hemisphere, Che Guevara urged that we "create two, three, many Vietnams," to destroy U.S. imperialism by cutting it off in the Third World tentacle by tentacle, and opening another front within the U.S. itself. At home, the struggle and insurrection of the Black liberation movement heightened our commitment to fight alongside the determined enemies of the empire.

This defined our international responsibility and our duty as white revolutionaries inside the oppressor nation. We are part of a wave of revolution sparked by the Black liberation struggle, by the death of Che in Bolivia in 1967, and by people's war in Vietnam. This period forged our belief in the revolutionary necessity of clandestine organization and armed struggle.²³⁰

This bombing was the seventh time in four years that the Weather Underground claimed responsibility for a bomb attack.²³¹ Along the way, they rebranded themselves the Weather Underground, in an attempt to, in name at least, live up to the anti-sexist themes

²²⁷ "Weather Underground Bombings", FBI, (May 18, 2016)

²²⁸ Ibid

²²⁹ "State Department Bombing by Weatherman Underground: Hearing before the Subcommittee to Investigate the Administration of the Internal Security Act and Other Internal Security Laws of the Committee on the Judiciary, United States Senate, Ninety-fourth Congress, First Session, January 31, 1975", 1

²³⁰ Ibid, 27

²³¹ Ibid, 9

they promoted as well.²³² Eventually, because of feuding and defections to other groups, the Weather Underground essentially disbanded in 1977.²³³

Occasionally, some left-wing extremist groups collaborated towards a common goal. In the late 1970s, holdovers of the Weather Underground, Black Panther party, and extremists from the obsolete SDS formed the May 19th Communist Organization (M19CO).²³⁴ The Black Liberation Army and Republic of New Africa also joined them.²³⁵ M19CO's aims were 1) to free political prisoners held in American prisons, 2) conduct robberies to "appropriate capitalist wealth" to underwrite the third goal, and 3) commence a series of terrorist attacks and bombings.²³⁶ In October 1981, M19CO members robbed a Brink's armored truck in Nyack, New York, killing two police officers and a Brink's security guard, and made off with \$1.6 million.²³⁷

Historically, left-wing extremist groups attempted to effect change in the United States through revolution, instead of the conventional political approach.²³⁸ They also tended to possess higher levels of education and displayed a greater capacity to organize than right-wing extremist groups.²³⁹ The Weather Underground (WU) is a prime example of this type of group.

²³² Law, *Terrorism: A History*, 256

²³² Smith, *Terrorism in America: Pipe Bombs and Pipe Dreams*, 93

²³³ Law, *Terrorism: A History*, 256

²³⁴ Smith, *Terrorism in America: Pipe Bombs and Pipe Dreams*, 24

²³⁵ Seger, "Left-Wing Extremism: The Current Threat", 1

²³⁶ Ibid

²³⁷ Smith, *Terrorism in America: Pipe Bombs and Pipe Dreams*, 9; Hewitt, *Understanding Terrorism in America: From the Klan to Al Qaeda*, 106

²³⁸ Watson, remarks on the Terrorist Threat Confronting the United States

²³⁹ Seger, "Left-Wing Extremism: The Current Threat", 5

One component of the move to violence by the Weather Underground was the declaration that this move was in support of Black revolutionaries.²⁴⁰ The Weather Underground's "use of political violence was partially intended to take some heat off of revolutionary Black groups like the Black Panthers while its struggle ... was intended to draw a line between those who were willing to fight and die for Black revolution and those who weren't."²⁴¹ In *Prairie Fire*, the Weather Underground's political statement, the group asserted that their initial protests were peaceable and nonviolent until the United States revealed its deceitful character.²⁴² The statement went on to express that the Weather Underground recognized the strength of "armed self-defense, mass rebellion, and revolutionary violence in the Black movement."²⁴³

Another element of the radicalization to violence was the disdain for American involvement in the Vietnam War. There were feelings of rage and profound frustration within the Weather Underground over an imperialistic war that a decidedly detested draft supported.²⁴⁴ Ultimately, the WU leadership determined that armed conflict based in guerrilla tactics was compulsory to accomplish their objectives.²⁴⁵ The goal was to create a revolutionary state of affairs by undermining the government and making it difficult for

²⁴⁰ *Prairie Fire: The Politics of Revolutionary Anti-Imperialism: Political Statement of the Weather Underground*, (Boston: Friends of the Underground, 1974), 7

²⁴¹ Ron Jacobs, "Outlaws of America: The Weather Underground and the Politics of Solidarity" (*Monthly Review: An Independent Socialist Magazine*, 2006), 61

²⁴² *Prairie Fire*, 7

²⁴³ *Ibid*

²⁴⁴ Hewitt, *Understanding Terrorism in America*, 49; Law, *Terrorism: A History*, 254

²⁴⁵ Ronald Radosh, "Moral Equivalence Run Amok", *Commentary* 143, no. 2: 39, (2017), 40

the empire to function.²⁴⁶ Simply put, the Weather Underground trusted that “strategic armed chaos” would incite large-scale public action against the establishment.²⁴⁷

In *Prairie Fire*, the Weather Underground stated several reasons the organization radicalized to violence. “Our enemy is United States imperialism” and “militancy stirs the imagination and raises the vision of victory” were the types of proclamations made in the statement.²⁴⁸ The Weather Underground was clear in the belief that “militancy ... is recognized and respected” in the streets, at a demonstration, in the penitentiary, or in a court of law, “as an uncompromising statement.”²⁴⁹ Not only did they acknowledge the unfailing presence of militancy in revolutionary movements, they expounded upon it.²⁵⁰ “Armed struggle brings resistance to a sharper and deeper level of development” and pushes “forward people’s consciousness and commitment.”²⁵¹

While not as prevalent a threat today as right-wing violent extremism, left-wing violent extremism was responsible for 75% of the domestic terrorism in the United States in the 1980s.²⁵² Groups like the Weather Underground executed assassinations, bombings, attacks on infrastructure, and robberies. Some groups even effected kidnappings and prison breaks. The SDS started out as student activists looking for a peaceful way to change the government and society but morphed into a revolutionary mentality with no patience for the peaceful path. Violence became the preferred method

²⁴⁶ Brent L. Smith, *Terrorism in America: Pipe Bombs and Pipe Dreams*, (Albany, N.Y: State University of New York Press, 1994), 98-99

²⁴⁷ Law, *Terrorism: A History*, 255

²⁴⁸ *Prairie Fire*, 139 & 144

²⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 144

²⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 5

²⁵¹ *Ibid*, 4

²⁵² Law, *Terrorism: A History*, 3

and the fall of communism may have been the real reason the Weather Underground and the left-wing extremist faded.

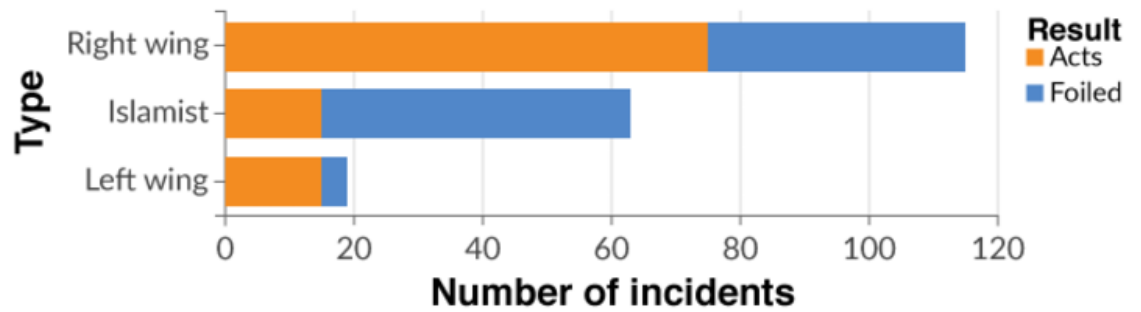
It is worthy of mentioning that left-wing extremism is not dead. Black liberation campaigns are pursuing a community-based political agenda. It is different from that of the 1970s that espoused terrorist activities. However, the lack of effective policy shaping has the potential to lead to extremist actions out of frustration. Black Lives Matter is one group to keep an eye on.

In the 1960s and 1970s, the Weather Underground radicalized to violence out of the Student Democratic Society. The WU deemed that revolutionary violence was necessary to support Black revolutionaries and to counter the devious nature of the United States government. Contempt for the imperialistic war in Vietnam also led the WU to attempt to create a revolutionary state in order to destroy American expansionism and interventionism. They believed that violence increased awareness and devotion of the oppressed. Ironically, most members of the WU were not oppressed, especially the leadership, and were able to avoid the draft they condemned because of their inborn affluence. The decline of Communism around the globe, the end of the Vietnam War, and increased civil rights, along with arrests of WU and other left-wing extremist led to an end of high volume of left-wing terrorism.

Figure 2 displays a comparison of the number of incidents, carried out and thwarted, by right wing, left wing, and Islamist terrorist. As indicated, during the Obama presidency, left-wing extremist attempted less than 20 attacks. At the same time, right-wing radicals carried out nearly four times as many but actually attempted almost six times the number of incidents for a total that is close to 120 events.

Figure 2. Comparison of terrorism incidents by category.²⁵³

Domestic terrorism incidents by type 2008-2016



Data: The Investigative Fund
Graphic: Scott Pham/Reveal

²⁵³ Jennifer Williams, "White American Men Are a Bigger Domestic Terrorist Threat than Muslim Foreigners", (Vox, October 02, 2017)

Chapter 3

Special-interest Violent Extremists

Eco-terrorism. Unlike the ideologically driven right- and left-wing extremist who hold values across the length of the political gamut, special-interest extremist “attempt to change one aspect of the social or political arena through terrorism.”²⁵⁴ Acts that fit this description include animal abuse, environmental abuse, the increase of nuclear power plants, and abortionist.²⁵⁵

In contrast to the decline of both right- and left-wing terrorism in the late 1980s, environmental extremist began drawing federal law enforcement’s attention because of the magnitude of their acts.²⁵⁶ Two groups, Earth First and the Animal Liberation Front (ALF) committed seven attributable acts of terrorism in the late 1980s.²⁵⁷ Along with Earth Night Action Group and the Evan Mecham Eco-Terrorist International Conspiracy, an Arizona-based splinter of Earth First, these groups sabotaged nuclear generation stations, committed arson on veterinary research facilities, and destroyed power poles.²⁵⁸ Environment extremist groups believe that human endeavors to maintain and enhance quality of life have led to the suffering and disappearance of other species.²⁵⁹

These groups attempt to avoid intentionally directing physical violence at people or animals but they do engage in theft, arson, destruction of property, and vandalism to further their goals.²⁶⁰ One notable faction of this brand of special-interest extremism was

²⁵⁴ Levin, *Domestic Terrorism*, 58; Smith, *Terrorism in America: Pipe Bombs and Pipe Dreams*, 125

²⁵⁵ Levin, *Domestic Terrorism*, 58

²⁵⁶ Smith, *Terrorism in America: Pipe Bombs and Pipe Dreams*, 27

²⁵⁷ Ibid

²⁵⁸ Ibid

²⁵⁹ Ibid, 125

²⁶⁰ Bjelopera, *Domestic Terrorism: An Overview*, 11

The Family.²⁶¹ *The Family* was a terrorist group comprised of around 20 people who perpetrated crimes in California, Wyoming, Oregon, Colorado, and Washington on behalf of the ELF and ALF.²⁶² Between 1995 and 2001, the members of this group committed more than 40 illegal acts, including vandalism and arson, resulting in damages exceeding \$45 million.²⁶³ Their most infamous act was the 1998 arson at a Vail, Colorado ski resort causing over \$26 million in damages.²⁶⁴ The Family also committed attacks on “federal land and animal management sites, private meat packing plants, lumber facilities, and a car dealership.”²⁶⁵

On January 20, 2006, the District of Oregon indicted 11 members of The Family on 65 counts, alleging acts of domestic terrorism that included use of destructive devices, conspiracy, arson, and destruction of an energy facility.²⁶⁶ Less than a year later, the U.S. District Court sentenced 10 of the members to prison sentences of 37 months up to 13 years.²⁶⁷ Joseph Mahmoud Dibee is the 11th member yet to go to trial. He evaded capture for 12 years but the Cuban authorities apprehended him attempting to flee to Russia, through Cuba, and turned him over to American authorities.²⁶⁸

Radical Environmentalist and Animal Rights (REAR) is a special-interest movement that comprises many divergent ideologies.²⁶⁹ However, they have a shared belief that “if left unchecked, humans will eventually bring the world to a cataclysmic

²⁶¹ "Update - Operation Backfire," FBI, November 19, 2008

²⁶² "Update - Operation Backfire," FBI, November 19, 2008; "Eco-Terror Indictments 'Operation Backfire' Nets 11," FBI, January 20, 2006

²⁶³ "Domestic Terrorism," FBI, August 10, 2018

²⁶⁴ Ibid

²⁶⁵ United States Department of Justice, National Security Division, *Progress Report April 2008*, (2008), 48

²⁶⁶ "Eco-Terror Indictments 'Operation Backfire' Nets 11," FBI, January 20, 2006

²⁶⁷ United States Department of Justice, National Security Division, *Progress Report*, 47

²⁶⁸ "Domestic Terrorism," FBI, August 10, 2018

²⁶⁹ Hirsch-Hoefler, "'Ecoterrorism': Terrorist Threat or Political Ploy?", 587

end.”²⁷⁰ One such group emerged in the United States in 1979 with problems concerning “the use of other species to further human ends.”²⁷¹ The Animal Liberation Front (ALF) primarily includes members who were previous members of other mainstream animal rights organizations who wished to engage in negotiations with the government and corporations.²⁷² When negotiations did not achieve the desired goal, ALF began opting for tactics that were more radical.²⁷³ Ronnie Lee, the founder of ALF, called for “a more radical approach ... in the form of rescuing animals and causing financial loss to animal exploiters, usually the damage and destruction of property.”²⁷⁴

The Earth Liberation Front (ELF), founded in the 1990s, is another component of the REAR movement. Its intentions are to commit unlawful activities to achieve their objectives.²⁷⁵ ELF describes itself as “an international underground organization that uses direction action in the form of economic sabotage to stop the exploitation and destruction of the natural environment.”²⁷⁶ Leslie Pickering, former ELF press secretary, proclaimed that following a protest the best possible result was local news coverage.²⁷⁷ However, once the ELF began creating substantial mayhem, they received request for interviews from television news magazines and international print publications such as *60 Minutes* and *Rolling Stone*.²⁷⁸ In testimony before Congress, one former spokesperson, under subpoena, declared that the United States engages in “oppression in its sickest forms”,

²⁷⁰ Smith, *Terrorism in America*, 125

²⁷¹ Ibid

²⁷² Luis Cordeiro-Rodrigues, "Is the Animal Liberation Front morally justified in engaging in violent and illegal activism towards animal farms?", (2016), 235

²⁷³ Ibid

²⁷⁴ Hirsch-Hoefler, "'Ecoterrorism': Terrorist Threat or Political Ploy?", 590

²⁷⁵ Ibid, 591

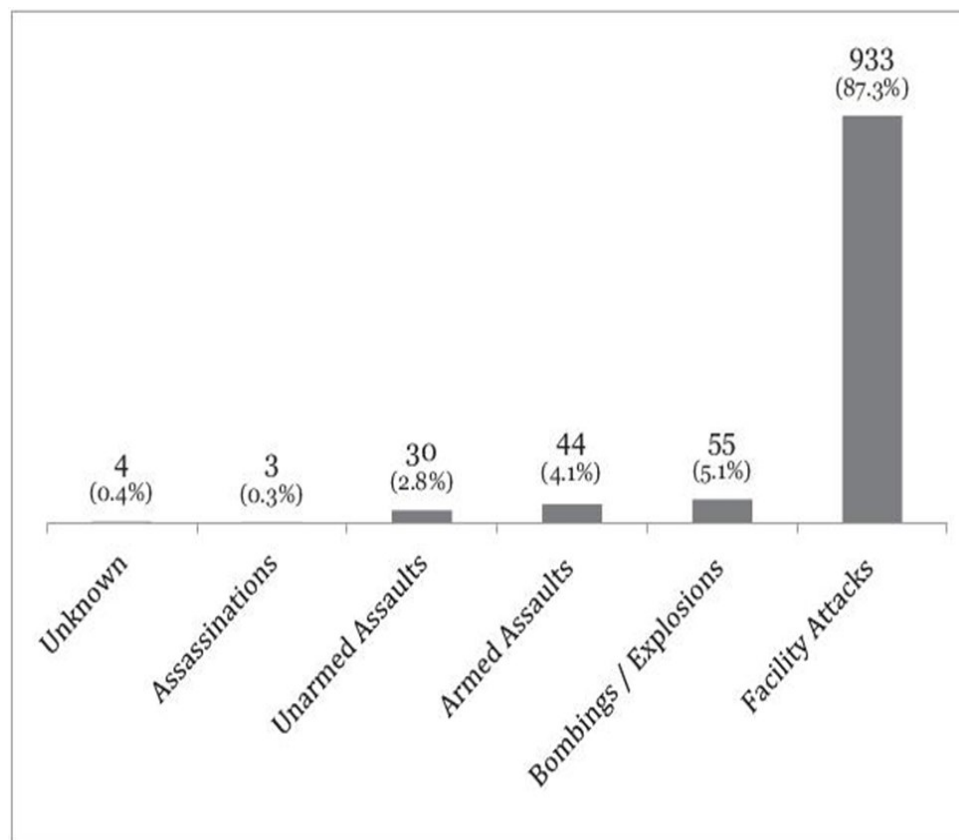
²⁷⁶ Ibid

²⁷⁷ Caroline Zimmerman, "A Brief History of Ecoterror", (*Common Review*, 2009), 36

²⁷⁸ Ibid

tolerates abuse and murder, and has its foundation in “murder, exploitation and ... genocide.”²⁷⁹ Figure 3 shows that of the 1,069 criminal acts committed by the REAR movement between 1970 and 2007, attacks on animal testing facilities totaling over 900 with the next two categories combined, bombings and armed assaults, adding up to 99.²⁸⁰

Figure 3. Criminal acts of the REAR movement in the United States, 1970 – 2007.²⁸¹



²⁷⁹ Sean Higgins, "The Terrorist Tactics of Radical Environmentalists", (2002)

²⁸⁰ Hirsch-Hoefler, "'Ecoterrorism': Terrorist Threat or Political Ploy?", 595

²⁸¹ Ibid

Abortion. In 1973, the United States Supreme Court ruled in *Roe v. Wade* that, under the 14th Amendment, a woman's right to an abortion is a protection within the right to privacy.²⁸² From 1973 to the present, those who oppose the ruling have waited in vain for a subsequent court to reverse the decision.²⁸³ However, there are those who are not willing to wait and have resorted to illegal actions in the absence of an acceptable legal remedy.²⁸⁴ From 1977 to 2017, there have been 11 murders, 26 attempted murders, 187 arsons, and 42 bombings targeting abortion providers.²⁸⁵ Prior to 1993, only the clinics were targeted by radicals, with a total 30 damaged by arson in 1984 alone.²⁸⁶ Conversely, in 1993, violent anti-abortion activists began embracing vitriolic rhetoric that justifiable homicide was vital to communicate the message of violence necessary to deter those who were taking human life.²⁸⁷ Believing they enjoyed broad support, these self-proclaimed "pro-life" radicals "crossed the line to use violence" and began targeting abortion clinic workers."²⁸⁸

One notorious extremist is Eric Robert Rudolph. Although his focus was primarily anti-abortion, Rudolph adopted beliefs and opinions from various places to form his own philosophy. He was also anti-government and anti-LGBT.²⁸⁹ Rudolph commenced his bombing attacks on July 27, 1996 when he placed a backpack with a bomb in it in Centennial Olympic Park in Atlanta, Georgia.²⁹⁰ The explosion killed a

²⁸² "Roe v. Wade." Oyez

²⁸³ Levin, *Domestic Terrorism*, 62

²⁸⁴ Ibid

²⁸⁵ "Escalation in Picketing, Trespassing, Obstruction, Clinic Blockades, Invasions, and Threats of Harm by Anti-abortion Extremists," National Abortion Federation, May 07, 2018

²⁸⁶ Law, *Terrorism: A History*, 313

²⁸⁷ Law, *Terrorism: A History*, 314; Levin, *Domestic Terrorism*, 60

²⁸⁸ Law, *Terrorism: A History*, 313 – 314

²⁸⁹ "Eric Rudolph," FBI, May 18, 2016

²⁹⁰ Ibid

woman who was watching the 1996 Summer Olympics and critically injured over 100.²⁹¹

Following a manhunt that lasted nearly 7 years, law enforcement officers arrested Rudolph. The Northern District of Georgia charged him with the July 27, 1996 bombing attack at Centennial Olympic Park.²⁹² The federal court indictment also charged Rudolph with the bombing of a family planning clinic in Sandy Springs, Georgia on January 16, 1997, injuring over 50 people, and the February 21, 1997 attack on the Otherside Lounge, an LGBT nightclub located in Midtown Atlanta.²⁹³ The nightclub bombing resulted in five people injured.²⁹⁴ The Northern District of Alabama also indicted Rudolph for the bombing of a Birmingham family planning clinic on January 29, 1998.²⁹⁵ This bombing killed a Birmingham Police Officer and seriously injured a nurse.²⁹⁶ Rudolph went into hiding after a witness spotted him during the Birmingham attack.²⁹⁷

Middle-of-the-road pro-life advocates are agreeable to finding the middle ground and discussing adaptations to abortion policy.²⁹⁸ For extremist, their grievances are “neither debatable nor negotiable.”²⁹⁹ One such anti-abortion absolutist is Eric Robert Rudolph. Rudolph received his initial introduction to radical ideas in 1984 when his family joined a Christian Identity Movement church in Missouri.³⁰⁰ He encountered the

²⁹¹ "Eric Rudolph," FBI, May 18, 2016; "Eric Robert Rudolph to Plead Guilty to Serial Bombing Attacks in Atlanta and Birmingham; Will Receive Life Sentences", WWW.USDOJ.GOV, April 8, 2005

²⁹² "Eric Robert Rudolph to Plead Guilty; Will Receive Life Sentences"

²⁹³ Ibid

²⁹⁴ Ibid

²⁹⁵ Ibid

²⁹⁶ Ibid

²⁹⁷ "Rudolph Added to FBI's Most Wanted List", Southern Poverty Law Center

²⁹⁸ Silverman, "An Exploratory Analysis of an Interdisciplinary Theory of Terrorism", 10

²⁹⁹ Ibid

³⁰⁰ George H. Conklin, "Terrorism in the United States: A Case Study of Eric Rudolph, a Homegrown Terrorist", (2016), 13; Beau Seegmiller, "Radicalized Margins: Eric Rudolph and Religious Violence", (October 25, 2007), 515

notions that abortion, miscegenation, and homosexuality were deep-seated ills of American society.³⁰¹

In 1987, Eric Rudolph enlisted in the Army, but his service was filled with “frustration and disappointed ambitions.”³⁰² He was involuntarily discharged in 1989, halfway through his enlistment, due to marijuana use.³⁰³ He moved to North Carolina to live with his mother until she sold the family home in May 1996.³⁰⁴ Just two months later, on July 27, 1996, Rudolph commenced a string of bombings.

Since the mid-1990s, abortion providers were the target of most abortion-related violence but Rudolph took on a more anti-government approach.³⁰⁵ In his statement, Rudolph revealed that the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta, Georgia was not the primary target but were a figurative embodiment of an “evil government.”³⁰⁶ He stated explicitly that he made this choice with “the intention of disrupting abortion, open homosexuality, and the Olympic Games, the latter in order to embarrass the Federal Government.”³⁰⁷

Rudolph believed that an effective attack would confuse, infuriate, and humiliate a government that was absent the “legitimacy and moral authority to govern due to legalizing abortion.”³⁰⁸ In his manifesto, he wrote:

We declare and will wage total war on the ungodly communist regime in New York and your legislative – bureaucratic lackeys in Washington. It is you who are responsible and preside over the murder of children and issue the policy of

³⁰¹ Seegmiller, "Radicalized Margins: Eric Rudolph and Religious Violence", 515

³⁰² Ibid

³⁰³ Ibid

³⁰⁴ Ibid

³⁰⁵ Bjelopera, *Domestic Terrorism: An Overview*, 33

³⁰⁶ Spaaij, "Endgame?", 1026

³⁰⁷ Seegmiller, "Radicalized Margins: Eric Rudolph and Religious Violence", 518

³⁰⁸ Spaaij, "Endgame?", 1026

ungodly perversion that's destroying our people. We will target all facilities and personnel of the Federal Government.³⁰⁹

Rudolph launched attacks on two abortion clinics and a lesbian bar however, the true nature of his attacks are found not in his targets but in his justification for his attacks. Rudolph penned, "At various times in history men and women of good conscience have had to decide when the lawfully constituted authorities have overstepped their moral bounds and forfeited their right to rule."³¹⁰ He went on to say that "in January of 1973 the government in Washington decided to descend into barbarism by sanctioning the ancient practice of infanticide by that act consigned 50 million unborn children to their graves."³¹¹ Ultimately, "there is no more legitimate reason to my knowledge, for renouncing allegiance to and if necessary using force to drag this monstrosity of a government down to the dust where it belongs."³¹²

Primarily separate and distinctive groups, ELF and ALF conduct Ecoterrorism in defense of the Earth and animal rights. The operational philosophy discourages acts that harm humans, animals, and nonhumans. Nevertheless, these groups have caused a significant amount of damage to government and private property with the intent of effecting change on public policy regarding the treatment of animals and protecting the environment. Anti-abortion violent extremist on the other hand believe that taking a life to save many other lives is acceptable. Eric Rudolph is one of those violent extremist. He, like many others believe that the government has failed the country by allowing legal

³⁰⁹ Seegmiller, "Radicalized Margins: Eric Rudolph and Religious Violence", 518

³¹⁰ Ibid, 519

³¹¹ Ibid

³¹² Ibid

abortion and that violent means are the only way to correct this mistake. Targets are normally clinics, doctors, nurses, first responders, and any other person or agency that facilitates an abortion. Rudolph also sought to embarrass the government on the world stage (1996 Atlanta Olympic Games) to get his message out.

The most prominent anti-abortionist domestic terrorist was Eric Rudolph. His form of terrorism could fit in special interest and lone-wolf terrorism but for the purposes of this argument, he is special interest. Rudolph was anti-government primarily because he believed the government lost all legitimate, ethical authority to lead because of legalized abortion. He used the attack on the Olympics to humiliate a government that he believed had exceeded decent boundaries and surrendered the right to govern. His other attacks, on abortion clinics and a gay nightclub, fit more with his Christian Identity exposure than with his frustration for the government, but they also reflect the fact that Rudolph was not at all accepting of the direction society was heading.

ELF and ALF both regard several government organizations as targets for attacks due to a hesitancy or refusal of the United States government to recognize and take action on global warming, other forms of environmental destruction, and animal abuses. Both elements of REAR discarded traditional means of environmental protection and defense against animal abuse and adopted radical policies and approaches to address these issues. While both groups claim that humans and non-humans are never the target of violence, they do acknowledge that violence is the only way the government and society will realize and accept that there is a significant need. Additionally, they contend that violence is ethically defensible as the last resort because all other means have been unsuccessful.

Chapter 4

Lone Wolf Actors

Between 1940 and 2013, there were 98 cases of lone wolf terrorism in the United States with 38 of those occurring before September 11, 2001 and 60 coming after.³¹³ The pre-9/11 cases were the result of 171 attacks with 98 deaths, and 305 injuries using firearms and homemade bombs while the post-9/11 lone wolf cases were responsible for 45 attacks with 55 deaths and 126 injured using firearms, bombs, knives, and biological weapons.³¹⁴ In contrast to 12 attacks on law enforcement prior to 9/11, 24 such attacks took place in the period following.³¹⁵ The rise correlates with anti-government and white supremacist anger triggered by the election of Barack Obama.³¹⁶

The first lone wolf case is Timothy McVeigh, the architect and perpetrator of the April 1995 terrorist attack on the federal building in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; arguably, the most heinous domestic terrorist attack carried out on American soil in the last 50 years.³¹⁷ The 7,000-pound bomb of nitromethane and ammonium killed 149 adults and 19 children at a federal building in Oklahoma City.³¹⁸ McVeigh believed the FBI and ATF to be liable for the Waco disaster just one year earlier and both agencies were had offices in the federal building.³¹⁹ McVeigh plunged himself deeply into gun and militia culture.³²⁰ His revulsion toward the government intensified and the passage of the 1994

³¹³ Hamm, "National Criminal Justice Reference Service", 3

³¹⁴ Ibid, 4

³¹⁵ Ibid

³¹⁶ Ibid

³¹⁷ Orlandrew E. Danzell and Lisandra M. Maisonet Montañez, "Understanding the lone wolf terror phenomena: assessing current profiles", (*Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism & Political Aggression*, 2016), 149

³¹⁸ Law, *Terrorism: A History*, 310

³¹⁹ Ibid

³²⁰ Kellner, *Guys and Guns Amok*, 104

Brady Bill assault weapons ban produced incredible distrust, rage, and resentment in McVeigh.³²¹ Because of this, he took what he believed to be preventive measures in Oklahoma City to impede the government from taking away his guns.³²²

In an interview for a biography, McVeigh told two reporters that he pictured himself as Luke Skywalker attacking the Death Star to destabilize the Evil Empire.³²³ The motion picture presented clerical workers and others who empowered the Evil Empire to work.³²⁴ When Luke destroyed the Death Star, those workers became unavoidable fatalities and the moviegoers cheered.³²⁵ This translated to an adult McVeigh's ability to put the killings of administrators, office assistant, other employees, and customers in the Murrah Building out of his mind and execute them with the same merciless calculation as he did the FBI and ATF.³²⁶ "They *were* part of the Evil Empire."³²⁷

On June 2, 1997, a jury found McVeigh guilty of eight counts of first-degree murder.³²⁸ The jury also found him guilty of one count of conspiracy to use a weapon of mass destruction, one count of use of a weapon of mass destruction, and one count of destruction by explosive.³²⁹ The jury also sentenced McVeigh to death.

Theodore Kaczynski is the second lone wolf case. Ted Kaczynski, known by the infamous UNABOMBER (university and airline bomber) moniker, committed 16

³²¹ Lou Michel and Dan Herbeck, *American Terrorist: Timothy McVeigh & the Oklahoma City Bombing*, (United States: BookBaby, 2015), 100; Kellner 104

³²² Kellner, *Guys and Guns Amok*, 103-104

³²³ Ibid, 103

³²⁴ Ibid

³²⁵ Ibid

³²⁶ Ibid

³²⁷ Ibid

³²⁸ Douglas Linder, *Verdict in the Timothy McVeigh Trial*, (2006)

³²⁹ Ibid

terrorist bombings that resulted in 3 deaths and 23 injured.³³⁰ In his manifesto, he made it clear that “in order to get our message before the public with some chance of making a lasting impression, we’ve had to kill people.”³³¹ Kaczynski killed Hugh Scrutton, a computer storeowner and the UNABOMBERS’S first fatality, with a bomb Kaczynski transported from Montana to Sacramento, CA.³³² Kaczynski positioned the bomb behind Rentech Computer Store in Sacramento and it exploded on December 11, 1985 when Scrutton moved it.³³³ The second lethal bombing victim was a public relations manager connected to ExxonMobil, Thomas Mosser. The bomb Kaczynski sent to Mosser’s home exploded on December 10, 1994.³³⁴ The last death attributed to the UNABOMBER’s brand of lone wolf terrorism was a timber industry lobbyist named Gilbert B. Murray.³³⁵ Murray’s death, on April 24, 1995, was the result of a bomb that Kaczynski transported from Montana to Oakland, CA and subsequently mailed to the California Forestry Association in Sacramento.³³⁶

A federal grand jury returned a 10-count indictment on Kaczynski including the charges of transporting an explosive device with intent to kill or injure, making an explosive device with intent to kill or injure, and using a destructive device in relation to a crime of violence.³³⁷

³³⁰ Danzell, "Understanding the lone wolf terror phenomena", 147

³³¹ Brett A. Barnett, “20 Years Later: A Look Back at the Unabomber Manifesto”, *Perspectives on Terrorism* 9, no. 6 (December 2015): 60–71, 65

³³² "Theodore Kaczynski Indicted in Sacramento", www.justice.gov, (June 18, 1996)

³³³ Ibid

³³⁴ Michael Mello, “The Non-Trial of the Century: Representations of the Unabomber”, *Vermont Law Review* 24, no. 2, (December 15, 2000), 4

³³⁵ "Theodore Kaczynski Indicted in Sacramento"

³³⁶ Ibid

³³⁷ "Theodore Kaczynski Indicted in Sacramento"

Cases selected from the domestic lone wolf extremist category needed to meet certain criteria that distinguished them from other lone wolf actors. The lone wolf must commit terrorism on United States soil and must have no motivations or influences from foreign states or cultures. The selection of different motives and aims illustrate the breadth of this form of terrorism.

McVeigh was a right-wing extremist and a former soldier in the Army but did not belong to nor directly affiliate with any known terrorist groups.³³⁸ The Turner Diaries, an extremist, white nationalism novel by former American Nazi Party official William Pierce, had long beguiled McVeigh.³³⁹ In addition, as a new recruit, McVeigh met two soldiers, Michael Fortier and Terry Nichols, who shared and encouraged his budding radical ideologies.³⁴⁰

McVeigh's time in the Army corresponded with Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm, a military action that was a cause of disagreement for him.³⁴¹ He regarded the presence of the United States military in Kuwait as the actions of a bully and he was frustrated with the lies told to service members about events of fratricide.³⁴² Following his return to the United States, McVeigh developed a series of personal issues with soldiers in his unit.³⁴³ He allegedly made racist comments and he wore a white power shirt on the military base for which he received a reprimand "for causing dissension in the ranks."³⁴⁴

³³⁸ Danzell, "Understanding the lone wolf terror phenomena: assessing current profiles", 149

³³⁹ Ibid, 150

³⁴⁰ Ibid

³⁴¹ Ibid

³⁴² Ibid

³⁴³ Ibid

³⁴⁴ Danzell, "Understanding the lone wolf terror phenomena", 150

After washing out of the Special Forces Course, McVeigh left the Army, returned home, and maintained the enraged political standpoint he developed in the Army.³⁴⁵ He viewed the government as participating in “reverse discrimination” and his move to violence solidified following the events at Ruby Ridge, the Waco Siege, and the passage of the Federal Assault Weapons Ban.³⁴⁶ Combined with his adversarial stance on taxes, these factors played a crucial part in McVeigh definitively believing that violence was the only way to oppose the federal government.³⁴⁷ He held the notion that these incidents proved that the government was treading on citizens’ rights.³⁴⁸ McVeigh was confident that his (white) culture, income, and possibly his existence was imperiled and sensed the need and urge to take direct action against the United States government.³⁴⁹ The result was 168 dead and over 500 injured.³⁵⁰

The second case is Theodore Kaczynski. This Harvard educated mathematics professor began the journey to radicalization while he was a student in Cambridge, Massachusetts.³⁵¹ His Harvard University general education program strengthened his contempt for science and technology.³⁵² For Kaczynski, it functioned as an organism that emphasized privileged ideals and principles of the scholarly.³⁵³ It was here that he began to view the rise of technology as the ultimate threat to society.³⁵⁴

³⁴⁵ Danzell, "Understanding the lone wolf terror phenomena", 150

³⁴⁶ Ibid

³⁴⁷ Vertigans, "Beyond the Fringe?", 647 & 650

³⁴⁸ Danzell, "Understanding the lone wolf terror phenomena", 150

³⁴⁹ Ibid

³⁵⁰ Law, *Terrorism: A History*, 310

³⁵¹ Ibid

³⁵² Danzell, "Understanding the lone wolf terror phenomena", 148

³⁵³ Danzell, "Understanding the lone wolf terror phenomena", 150

³⁵⁴ Ibid

During his graduate studies at the University of Michigan, he adopted the belief that math and science were an apparatus to further the annihilation of civilization.³⁵⁵ In 1969, after only two years as an assistant professor at the University of California, Berkeley, Kaczynski resigned, moved to Lincoln, Montana, and built a small cabin with no utilities.³⁵⁶ It appeared as though he sought absolute seclusion and freedom from societal connections but this isolation ended nine years later in 1978.³⁵⁷ Kaczynski, however, was unable to reintegrate successfully into society, returned to Montana, and initiated his 17-year reign of terror.³⁵⁸

Ten months before his capture, the UNABOMBER sent his manifesto, *Industrial Society and its Future*, to numerous newspapers.³⁵⁹ In it, Kaczynski stated that technology made life unrewarding and it was the root of pervasive psychological suffering.³⁶⁰ The manifesto's jibes at "political correctness" and "minority movements" also expose another infuriated "white male angry about the course of contemporary society and politics."³⁶¹

³⁵⁵ Danzell, "Understanding the lone wolf terror phenomena", 150

³⁵⁶ Ibid

³⁵⁷ Ibid

³⁵⁸ Ibid

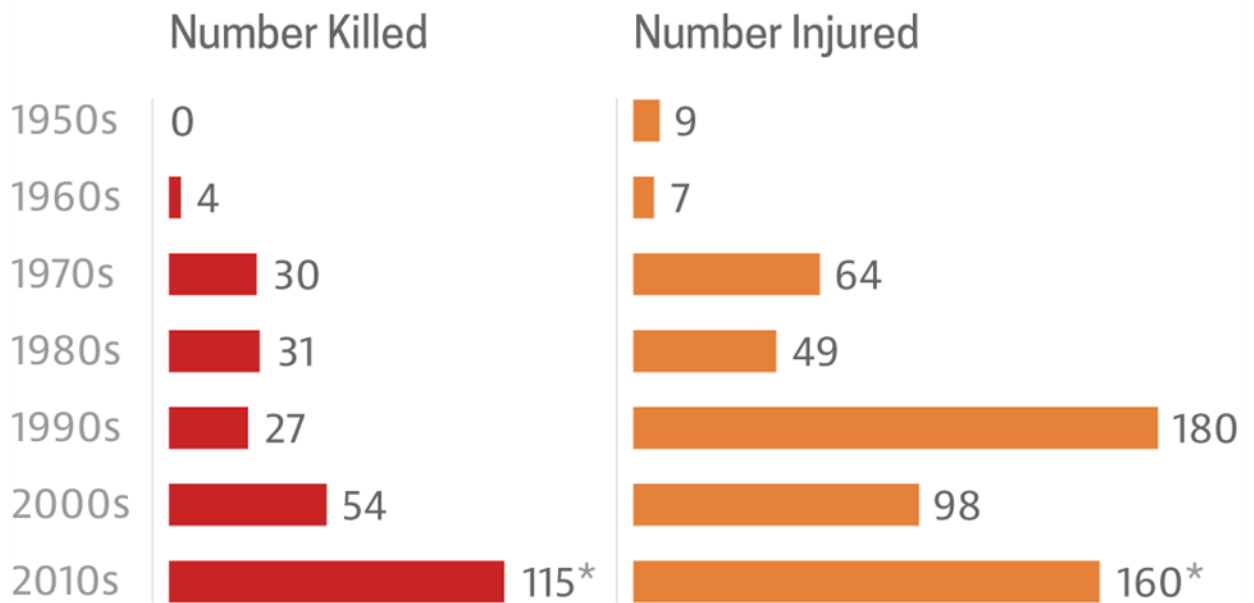
³⁵⁹ Brooke Adams, "UNABOMBER", (DeseretNews.com. April 11, 1996)

³⁶⁰ Danzell, "Understanding the lone wolf terror phenomena", 148

³⁶¹ Kellner, *Guys and Guns Amok*, 116

Figure 4. Lone Wolf Casualties: 1950s – 2010s³⁶²

Lone Wolf Attacks



*Includes Orlando and Dallas attacks

Lone wolf violent extremists are not bound to any particular social or political ideology. They find motivation in racism, anti-abortion, and anti-government issues. Figure 4 depicts the growth of the threat lone wolf actors pose, both in injuries and in deaths. As with McVeigh, he had problems assimilating into society and was weary of new firearms laws. Kaczynski was anti-government and anti-technology. He believed that society needed to slow down. Regardless of the motives or individual ideological agendas for lone wolf actors, the commonality that binds them all is that violence is the only method to change a failed system. They also recognize that by transforming their political

³⁶² "Lone Wolf Attacks Are Becoming More Common -- And More Deadly," PBS

philosophies into violence, lone wolf terrorists are becoming archetypes for sympathizers to follow. Both McVeigh, Kaczynski, and even Roof, while not used as a lone wolf in this example, have followers who espouse their beliefs and hope to emulate their heroes.

McVeigh and Kaczynski were both lone-wolf actors but the motivation and the targets were different. The government and non-whites were the subject of McVeigh's attack. By embracing *The Turner Diaries*, he self-radicalized and was emboldened and bolstered in his ideology by Nichols and Fortier. His frustration with the government began with his disillusioned military service and continued with the Waco Siege (he was present for the siege), the weapons ban under President Clinton, and the belief that the government was encroaching on citizens' rights.

Kaczynski, on the other hand, expressed minimal frustration with the government. He directed attacks at those he believed were spreading the scourge of technology. An elitist education that highlighted the affluent was the beginning of Kaczynski's radicalization. He viewed math and science as the mechanisms to destroy society. Only in his manifesto did he articulate his contempt for the government. There he revealed his belief that technology caused psychological sufferings and he showed that he was an enraged white man outraged with the changing of his inborn status.

Chapter 5

Current law and the need to improve

The Transnational Records Access Clearinghouse (TRAC), a watchdog group funded by Syracuse University, evaluated the number of terrorism cases recorded by three groups, the National Security Division of the Justice Department (253), federal prosecutors (310), and the federal courts (508).³⁶³ Of the terrorism cases listed by each group, only 4 percent received the classification of terrorism by all three.³⁶⁴ This suggests that the agencies and not the facts of the cases decided whether a defendant warranted prosecution as a terrorist, potentially receiving a tougher sentence.³⁶⁵

The contention offered here is that 1) the threat of domestic terrorism in the United States is as relevant a threat as, if not a greater threat than, international terrorism and 2) current statute on the topic of domestic terrorism is unsound and improvements are necessary. This is increasingly significant as the United States faces more violent incidents, and threats of violence, executed by or in the name of violent right-wing extremist ideologies.³⁶⁶ In modern American society, given the various extremist ideologies, is more attention for domestic terrorism warranted and does the current statute effectively allow the FBI and federal prosecutors to combat the threat created by the rise of right wing extremist groups?

³⁶³ "Militant Extremists in the United States," Council on Foreign Relations; "Who Is a Terrorist? Government Failure to Define Terrorism Undermines Enforcement, Puts Civil Liberties at Risk," Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse (TRAC) - Comprehensive, Independent, and Nonpartisan Information on Federal Enforcement, Staffing and Funding, September 28, 2009

³⁶⁴ Ibid

³⁶⁵ Ibid

³⁶⁶ McCord, "It's Time for Congress to Make Domestic Terrorism a Federal Crime"

Need for increased attention. One of Representative Hamilton outlined steps was to address the underlying objections that precipitate terrorism.³⁶⁷ Even 35 years ago, he felt that the United States needed to strengthen its domestic terrorism laws by increasing fines and prison sentences.³⁶⁸ Another step was to enhance the intelligence activities directed at suspected extremist organization.³⁶⁹ This approach remains relevant today as the GAO report maintains that the CVE lacks of a cohesive strategy. Such an approach could aid in ensuring that the actions taken by the agencies involve in CVE are quantifiable and affect the overarching objectives of the federal government's terrorism endeavors.³⁷⁰ In the three years following 9/11, the FBI had 3,255 field agents working counterterrorism, both international and domestic.³⁷¹ Yet, a 2010 Department of Justice Inspector General audit revealed that from 2005 to 2009 the Bureau averaged less than 330 field agents allocated to domestic terrorism investigations.³⁷²

Data produced by the federal government, augmented by research from scholastic organizations and advocacy groups, establishes the glaring underemphasizing of violence on the far right, occasionally categorized as hate crimes or civil rights violations, as a matter of rule and procedure in the DOJ.³⁷³ German, a former Special Agent with the FBI, divulges that the DOJ has long downplayed the priority of far-right violence.³⁷⁴ That is despite the fact that, according to the GAO report, the far right has committed 73

³⁶⁷ "Required Reading on Domestic Terrorism," Central Intelligence Agency

³⁶⁸ Ibid

³⁶⁹ Ibid

³⁷⁰ United States, Government Accountability Office, *Countering Violent Extremism*, introduction page

³⁷¹ German, "Wrong Priorities on Fighting Terrorism", 2

³⁷² Ibid

³⁷³ Ibid, 1

³⁷⁴ Samantha Michaels, "Why so Many Violent White Supremacists Aren't Charged with Domestic Terrorism," Mother Jones, April 27, 2019

percent of the lethal acts of violence in the United States since 9/12.³⁷⁵ Even now, the focus is mainly on Muslims and immigrants, overlooking the robust intricacies of terrorism threats in the United States — especially, the bona fide and unrelenting danger of far-right extremism.³⁷⁶

Adequacy of current federal terrorism statute. With the advent of the Ku Klux Klan in December 1865, right wing terrorism has existed in the United States for over 150 years. It clearly did not began with the 2016 presidential campaign, but apprehensions did increase as then-candidate Donald Trump's intolerant xenophobic and racist speechmaking stirred rallies around the nation where member of white nationalist groups, far right militias, and neo-Nazis took part in outright violence.³⁷⁷ Whereas it is legal to have extremist principles or become a member of most extremist organizations, as protected by the First Amendment, it is illegal to plot and act violently based on those principles.³⁷⁸

A common charge for violent right wing extremist is the hate crime – violence carried out by racists, xenophobic, or homophobic movements or groups with the intention to intimidate the whole community.³⁷⁹ In 1994, the Congress issued a directive to the Sentencing Commission to modify its sentencing guidelines to make available a suitable enhancement for any felony, perpetrated at home or abroad, that engages in or attempts to promote international terrorism, unless such engagement or aim is itself a

³⁷⁵ Tim Lau, "Flawed Terrorism Report Shows Administration's Skewed Priorities," Flawed Terrorism Report Shows Administration's Skewed Priorities | Brennan Center for Justice, January 07, 2019

³⁷⁶ Ibid

³⁷⁷ German, "Wrong Priorities on Fighting Terrorism", 1

³⁷⁸ Carpenter, "The Ad Hoc Federal Crime of Terrorism", 417

³⁷⁹ German, "Wrong Priorities on Fighting Terrorism", 11

crime.³⁸⁰ Wadie Said, law professor at University of South Carolina observes that this terrorism enhancement, later applied to domestic terrorism as well, supplies a medium of a significant nature to comment on immense condemnation and denunciation of terrorism.³⁸¹

Indicting suspects with hate crimes performs a comparable function.³⁸² On the other hand, it would appear improper, and would devalue the importance of the crime, to avoid even making an effort to seek the enhancement.³⁸³ A refusal to try might imply that white supremacist terrorism is less significant than jihadi terrorism.³⁸⁴ Minimalizing this violence as one-off occurrences committed by lone wolves or troubled persons as opposed to acknowledging them as symptoms of an ideology is to squander a chance to concentrate society's and law enforcement's attention on the issue.³⁸⁵

Other chargeable offenses include lying to the FBI, gun related charges, or drugs. Some of the charges leveled against right-wing violent extremist in the last five years include unlawful possession of unregistered firearm silencers and firearms, possession of controlled substance, using a weapon of mass destruction, and interstate transportation of an explosive.³⁸⁶ Others involve conveying a threat in interstate commerce, unlawful use of mails, carrying an explosive during the commission of a felony, using and carrying a

³⁸⁰ Wadie E. Said, "Sentencing Terrorist Crimes," *Ohio State Law Journal* 75, no. 3 (2014), 499

³⁸¹ Jesse J. Norris, "Why Dylann Roof is a Terrorist under federal law, and why it matters", *Harvard Journal on Legislation*, 519

³⁸² *Ibid*, 522

³⁸³ *Ibid*

³⁸⁴ *Ibid*

³⁸⁵ Simon Clark, "Confronting the Domestic Right-Wing Terrorist Threat," *Center for American Progress*, March 7, 2019

³⁸⁶ "Four California Men Charged with Conspiracy to Violate Federal Riots Statute," *The United States Department of Justice*, October 03, 2018; *United States of America v Christopher Paul Hasson* (The United States District Court for the District of Maryland February 27, 2019), 1

destructive device in furtherance of a crime of violence, and conspiracy to violate federal riots statute.³⁸⁷ Two federal laws that the FBI uses the most to prosecute domestic terrorist are Title 18 USC Section 2101, Riots, and 231, Civil disorders. The United States Code (USC) defines a violation of Riots as

(a) Whoever travels in interstate or foreign commerce or uses any facility of interstate or foreign commerce, including, but not limited to, the mail, telegraph, telephone, radio, or television, with intent — to incite a riot; or to organize, promote, encourage, participate in, or carry on a riot; or to commit any act of violence in furtherance of a riot; or to aid or abet any person in inciting or participating in or carrying on a riot or committing any act of violence in furtherance of a riot.³⁸⁸

The USC also defines Civil Disorders as “any public disturbance involving acts of violence by assemblages of three or more persons, which causes an immediate danger of or results in damage or injury to the property or person of any other individual.”³⁸⁹ These charges seem to be inadequate as well. Although some of these offenses carry the harshest punishment available, the death penalty, they fall short of holding the offenders liable for what they really did or attempted to do: carry out domestic terrorism.³⁹⁰

Former federal prosecutor Ken White said, “People might be unhappy it’s not labeled terrorism, but that doesn’t make a difference in how much jail time someone gets.”³⁹¹ The charges, convictions, and sentences do not completely address the

³⁸⁷ "Cesar Altieri Sayoc Charged In 30-Count Indictment With Mailing Improvised Explosive Devices," The United States Department of Justice, November 09, 2018

³⁸⁸ Title 18 - CRIMES AND CRIMINAL PROCEDURE PART I - CRIMES, CHAPTER 102 - § RIOTS-2101 - Riots (2012)

³⁸⁹ Title 18 - CRIMES AND CRIMINAL PROCEDURE PART I - CRIMES, CHAPTER 12 - § CIVIL DISORDERS-232 – Definitions (2012)

³⁹⁰ Mary B. McCord, "It's Time for Congress to Make Domestic Terrorism a Federal Crime," Lawfare, (December 10, 2018)

³⁹¹ Michaels, "Why so Many Violent White Supremacists Aren't Charged with Domestic Terrorism

overarching domestic terrorism issue. Enacting a terrorism statute and using it would require federal law enforcement to allocate additional assets to investigating violence from far-right extremist.³⁹² The terrorism tag carries significance – it establishes an ethical equivalency between domestic terrorism and international terrorism.³⁹³ McCord denotes that the enactment of a statute would announce to the nation that extremism is a major threat whether founded in domestic economic, social, political, or religious ideologies or rooted in extremist Islamic ideologies.³⁹⁴

Cases

Black Nationalist. In the days following the fatal shooting of Michael Brown by a Ferguson, Missouri police officer, protest and riots ensued. In response to the perceived excessive use of force by the officer, members of various Black Nationalists movements descended upon Ferguson. Some Black Nationalists, promoters for economic autonomy, African American racial self-respect, and black separatism, carried assault weapons, rifles, and shot guns under the pretext of self-defense.³⁹⁵ Two members of the New Black Panther Party, Olajuwon Davis and Brandon Orlando Baldwin, pled guilty in U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Missouri to one felony count of conspiracy to damage or destroy a building by use of an explosive.³⁹⁶

³⁹² Michaels, "Why so Many Violent White Supremacists Aren't Charged with Domestic Terrorism,

³⁹³ McCord, "It's Time for Congress to Make Domestic Terrorism a Federal Crime"

³⁹⁴ Ibid

³⁹⁵ "Daryl Johnson, "Return of the Violent Black Nationalist," Southern Poverty Law Center, August 8, 2017); "Black Nationalism," The Martin Luther King, Jr., Research and Education Institute, (May 21, 2018)

³⁹⁶ "Two Local Men Sentenced on Federal Explosives and Weapons Charges," FBI, (September 03, 2015)

Both men also pled guilty to conspiracy to make false written statements pertaining to the purchase of and transfer of firearms to a felon.³⁹⁷ Both men received sentences of 84 months in prison.³⁹⁸ While not charge with domestic terrorism, the actions of both Davis and Baldwin appear to have been intended to affect the conduct of a government by mass destruction and intimidate or coerce a civilian, falling squarely within the definition of domestic terrorism at outlined in 18 U.S. Code § 2331 (5) (B) (i) & (iii).

Unite the Right – Charlottesville. According to the June 27, 2018 indictment of James Alex Fields Jr., in the United States District Court for the Western District of Virginia, on August 12, 2017, Fields “rapidly accelerated” his Dodge Challenger straight into a crowd of people in Charlottesville, Virginia striking numerous individuals and killing Heather Heyer.³⁹⁹ The people were protesting against various forms of discrimination, a response to the “Unite the Right” rally at Emancipation Park that same day.⁴⁰⁰ Fields had previously communicated, on social media and in person, his attitudes of racial superiority and promoted violence against Jews, African Americans, and other non-white ethnic, racial, and religious groups.⁴⁰¹

The federal grand jury indicted Fields on one charge of a Hate Crime Act Resulting in Death, twenty-eight counts of a Hate Crime Act involving the attempt to kill, one count of Bias-Motivated Interference with Federally Protected Activity Resulting in

³⁹⁷ "Two Local Men Sentenced"

³⁹⁸ Ibid

³⁹⁹ UNITED STATES OF AMERICA V. JAMES ALEX FIELDS JR, (United States District Court for the Western District of Virginia June 27, 2018), 3

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid, 1 & 3

⁴⁰¹ Ibid, 1

Death.⁴⁰² The last charge included the potential for a death sentence but Fields avoided that fate by pleading guilty to the first 29 counts.⁴⁰³ No charges of domestic terrorism were brought against Fields however, his actions appear to have been intended to intimidate or coerce a civilian population in violation of 18 U.S. Code § 2331 (5) (B) (i).

On June 28, 2019, a federal court judge sentenced Fields to life in prison.⁴⁰⁴ In a Department of Justice news release, FBI Special Agent in Charge David Archey stated, “This is also a case of domestic terrorism, and we must send a message that terrorism and hatred-inspired violence have no place in our communities.”⁴⁰⁵ If this is domestic terrorism, as it does fit the statutory definition, Fields’ and his racist, white supremacist ideology are terrorists.

Coast Guard Officer. On February 15, 2019, federal law enforcement officers arrested US Coast Guard Lieutenant Christopher Paul Hasson. A federal grand jury charged him with possession of a firearm and ammunition by an unlawful user or addict of controlled substances.⁴⁰⁶ But according to the Motion for Denial Pending Trial, “The defendant is a domestic terrorist, bent on committing acts dangerous to human life that are intended to affect governmental conduct.”⁴⁰⁷ Hasson embraced extremist views

⁴⁰² UNITED STATES OF AMERICA V. JAMES ALEX FIELDS JR, 4 & 6

⁴⁰³ "James Alex Fields Jr., Who Killed Heather Heyer at 'Unite the Right,' Pleads Guilty to Federal Charges," Southern Poverty Law Center

⁴⁰⁴ "Ohio Man Sentenced to Life in Prison for Federal Hate Crimes Related to August 2017 Car Attack at Rally in Charlottesville, Virginia," The United States Department of Justice, June 28, 2019

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid

⁴⁰⁶ United States of America v Christopher Paul Hasson (The United States District Court for the District of Maryland February 27, 2019), 1

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid

for many years declaring himself “a long time White Nationalist, having been a skinhead 30 plus years ago before my time in the military.”⁴⁰⁸

Messages recovered from his government computer revealed Hasson’s violent extremist beliefs. “I never saw a reason for mass protest or wearing uniforms marching around provoking people with swastikas etc. I was and am a man of action you cannot change minds protesting like that. However, you can make change with a little focused violence.”⁴⁰⁹ Hasson composed a hit list of important Democratic Congressional leaders and CNN and MSNBC media figures while conducting internet searches, also on his government computer.⁴¹⁰ The list included Joe Scarborough, Ari Melber, and Chris Hayes from MSNBC, U.S. Senators Richard Blumenthal, Tim Kaine, Chuck Schumer, and Elizabeth Warren.⁴¹¹ Other names on the list were House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Don Lemon from CNN, and U.S. Representatives Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Maxine Waters, and Ilhan Omar.⁴¹²

A magistrate judge granted Hasson’s petition for release with an agreed upon plan to have Hasson wear a GPS monitor until his trial was complete.⁴¹³ A Maryland federal judge later ruled that pretrial detention is appropriate and vacated the magistrate judge’s decision to release Hasson.⁴¹⁴ Domestic terrorism charges are not pending for Hasson. However, similar to the others listed, his actions clearly encompass the three components of the domestic terrorism statute: appear to be intended (i) to intimidate or coerce a

⁴⁰⁸ United States of America v Christopher Paul Hasson, 2 & 4

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid, 4

⁴¹⁰ Ibid, 10

⁴¹¹ Ibid, 11 - 12

⁴¹² United States of America v Christopher Paul, 11 - 12

⁴¹³ David Shortell, "Coast Guard Officer Accused of Domestic Terror Threat to Remain in Jail until Trial," CNN, May 13, 2019

⁴¹⁴ Shortell, "Coast Guard Officer Accused of Domestic Terror Threat to Remain in Jail until Trial"

civilian population, (ii) to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion, or (iii) to affect the conduct of a government by mass destruction, assassination, or kidnapping.

Court bombs. Edward Nesgoda threatened blow up the Schuylkill County Courthouse in Pottsville, Pennsylvania, after the family court issued an order against him in January 2002.⁴¹⁵ Nesgoda acknowledged over a monitored phone call that he had constructed explosive devices and threatened to attack the Courthouse.⁴¹⁶ Nesgoda's home was searched and 19 grenades, 60 37mm "bird buster" rounds, a 37mm launcher, three firearms, and ammunition was found along with additional ingredients used to fabricate grenades.⁴¹⁷

On January 22, 2003, a grand jury indicted Nesgoda on charges of creating a substantial risk of bodily injury by destroying property and possession of destructive devices.⁴¹⁸ Nesgoda pled guilty on November 6, 2003 to count two of a superseding indictment that charged him with possession of unregistered destructive devices, the grenades.⁴¹⁹ The District Court found that the resulting Sentencing Guidelines Range was 121-151 months, but the statutory maximum penalty was 120 months. Six months later the court sentenced Nesgoda to 10 years in prison.⁴²⁰ Nesgoda's actions appear to be intended to affect the conduct of a government by mass destruction and yet another example of domestic terrorism charged as something other than.

⁴¹⁵ UNITED STATES OF AMERICA v. EDWARD NESGODA (UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS FOR THE THIRD CIRCUIT), 2

⁴¹⁶ Ibid, 2

⁴¹⁷ Ibid

⁴¹⁸ UNITED STATES OF AMERICA v. EDWARD, 2 - 3

⁴¹⁹ Ibid, 3

⁴²⁰ Ibid

Beltway Snipers. Beginning on October 2, 2002, John Allen Muhammad and Lee Boyd Malvo began a killing spree in Wheaton, Maryland that lasted over three weeks.⁴²¹ The FBI, Montgomery County SWAT, and Maryland State Police apprehended them, but not before ten people were murdered, three critically wounded, across Maryland and Virginia at the hands of the D.C. Snipers and a Bushmaster .223-caliber rifle.⁴²² “The sense of dread that hovered over the entire community was immeasurable.”⁴²³ Exposed to unspeakable terror, The Beltway, a metropolitan district of roughly four million people, endured widespread fear of indiscriminate violence.⁴²⁴ The Commonwealth of Virginia tried and convicted Mohammad and Malvo, a minor at the time, of terrorism and capital murder. The jury sentenced Muhammad to death but Malvo avoided the death penalty after the US Supreme Court banned the punishment for minors.⁴²⁵ Commonwealth of Virginia’s Department of Corrections carried out Muhammad’s sentence on November 10, 2009.

Arguably, these acts are the clearest act of domestic terrorism in the United States since McVeigh and Oklahoma City. Federal law enforcement however, the federal government tried neither Muhammad nor Malvo under the federal domestic terrorism statute. Both were indicted for capital murder in the commission of an act of terrorism under Virginia Code §§18.2-31(13).⁴²⁶

⁴²¹ "Beltway Snipers," FBI, May 18, 2016

⁴²² Ibid

⁴²³ JOHN ALLEN MUHAMMAD v. STATE OF MARYLAND (THE COURT OF SPECIAL APPEALS OF MARYLAND), 3

⁴²⁴ Ibid

⁴²⁵ "Lee Boyd Malvo Fast Facts," CNN, September 24, 2018

⁴²⁶ "FindLaw's Supreme Court of Virginia Case and Opinions.," Findlaw

NC bomb maker. The United States District Court for the Middle District of North Carolina charged Justin Carl Moose on charges of “providing information related to the making, use, or manufacture of an explosive, destructive device, or weapon of mass destruction” to an individual he thought was plotting to bomb a North Carolina women’s health clinic.⁴²⁷ The complaint also alleged that Moose supplied in depth information and training on several explosives and incendiary techniques to facilitate the destruction a North Carolina abortion clinic.⁴²⁸

Moose faced up to 20 years in prison and a \$250,000.00 fine if convicted of Title 18, United States Code, Section 842(p) (2) (B), Distribution of Information Relating to Explosives, Destructive Devices, and Weapons of Mass Destruction but pled guilty and was sentenced to 30 months in prison and three years of supervised release.⁴²⁹ Moose’s actions, while not charged as terrorism, squarely fit the definition of terrorism as prescribed in 18 U.S. Code § 2339A, providing material support to terrorists.⁴³⁰

In modern American society, given the various extremist ideologies, *is more attention for domestic terrorism warranted and does the current statute effectively allow the FBI and federal prosecutors to combat the threat created by the rise of right wing extremist groups?* Mass shootings and the Oklahoma City Federal Building bombing revealed that main street America is not immune to the scourge of domestic terrorism.⁴³¹ The inquiry into McVeigh’s personal history by law enforcement and the media

⁴²⁷ "Concord Man Arrested for Providing Bomb-Making Advice", FBI, April 04, 2011

⁴²⁸ Ibid

⁴²⁹ "Concord Man Arrested for Providing Bomb-Making Advice"; United States of America v. Justin Carl Moose (United States District Court for the Middle District of North Carolina)

⁴³⁰ "18 U.S. Code § 2339A - Providing Material Support to Terrorists," Legal Information Institute

⁴³¹ Netanyahu, *Fighting Terrorism*, 3

uncovered a perplexing combination of white supremacist, far right, and antigovernment groups.⁴³² Moreover, white supremacists, historically the most brutal right wing group, have intensified their recruiting and rhetoric since 9/11.⁴³³ Conversely, the number of traditional left wing terrorist groups have declined recently.⁴³⁴ According to the *FBI Strategic Plan 2004-2009*, the most substantial domestic terrorism threat over the next five years will remain the “lone wolf” terrorist.⁴³⁵

In the same report, the FBI listed its top 10 priorities, in order of precedence. As stated previously, protecting the United States from terrorist attacks is the number one priority while protecting civil rights is number five and combatting significant violent crimes is number eight.⁴³⁶ Every case outlined to this point, either in this chapter or in the chapters dedicated to specific ideologies falls into the fifth or either priority. Unlike hate crimes and other violent crimes, the result of terrorism lingers in the local community and more than just the direct victims feel the effects. The larger population suffers the aftermath, as it remains long after the physical wounds have healed.

Since the FBI’s number one priority is counterterrorism, admitting that specific acts of extremist right wing violence and hate crimes match the legal definition of domestic terrorism would communicate to victims and the greater population that the Department of Justice takes stopping attacks against minorities and the marginalized as grievously as it takes any other violent actions it declares “terrorism.”⁴³⁷ Acknowledging

⁴³² Netanyahu, *Fighting Terrorism*, 14-15

⁴³³ FBI Strategic plan, 27

⁴³⁴ Ibid, 15

⁴³⁵ Ibid, 27

⁴³⁶ Ibid, 5

⁴³⁷ German, "Wrong Priorities on Fighting Terrorism", 16-17

Dylann Roof's crimes as terrorism would advance constructive counterterrorism strategies, and will possibly have productive results in society for terrorism prevention and race relations.⁴³⁸ Recognizing crimes like James Alex Field's as domestic terrorism would encourage real policymaking by establishing that these crimes are not unique or one-offs but actually based in ideology.⁴³⁹

Use of the international terrorism statute sends a message that activates investigative apparatuses and authorities that traverse borders and creates an environment for effectual unified law enforcement.⁴⁴⁰ This is not the case in domestic terrorism. However, an amended statute that includes hate crimes and other violent crimes, number five and either on the FBI priority list, would necessarily expand the law to have an impact on violent domestic extremist groups.⁴⁴¹ If the United States is to guard against *domestic* terrorism, there are few options but to adopt an aggressive stance against terror.⁴⁴² These aggressive measures include surveilling the actions of groups or persons that encourage or promote violence and using anticipatory arrests and prosecutions when it becomes evident that planning for terrorist violence is happening.⁴⁴³

The United States Congress is where it all starts. Congress should legislate a statute that has specific infractions and those infractions should have mandatory minimum sentences that are equal to those imposed under the international statute. Congress should bolster its scrutiny of federal counterterrorism programs with the hate

⁴³⁸ Norris, "Why Dylann Roof is a Terrorist under federal law, and why it matters", 525

⁴³⁹ Ibid

⁴⁴⁰ Carpenter, "The Ad Hoc Federal Crime of Terrorism", 410

⁴⁴¹ Ibid, 417

⁴⁴² Netanyahu, *Fighting Terrorism*, 28

⁴⁴³ Ibid, 28-29

crimes and other violent crimes included as terrorism, to guarantee that resources addressed the most lethal threats and that all Americans are afforded equal protection under the law.⁴⁴⁴ This includes mandating that the Department of Justice generate comprehensive reports on all potential breaches of the federal domestic terrorism statute, on a federal, state, and local level.⁴⁴⁵

This would compel the FBI to become adequately acquainted with each occurrence and cultivate pertinent facts about both the offender and the victim.⁴⁴⁶ However, this mechanism currently does not exist. At present, advocacy organizations, academic institutions, and think tanks endeavor to collect data from court records and the media to create an image of the domestic terrorism threat.⁴⁴⁷ However, to this end, each organization uses its own characterization of what amounts to a terrorist incident, swinging from sabotage to mass murder.⁴⁴⁸ This leads to extraordinarily conflicting data that make any evaluation or thorough comparisons of the various threats exceedingly difficult.⁴⁴⁹ Unfortunately, “terrorism, like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder.”⁴⁵⁰

Effective enforce of an improved statute could be aided by a shift in how terrorism is understood. The previous chapters paid a considerable amount of attention to various ideologies and their radicalization to terrorism. This made clear that ideology is relevant when asking whom the prevalent threat is *now*. A revised federal statute can correct for the focus on ideology by permitting any investigation to concentrate on the

⁴⁴⁴ German, "Wrong Priorities on Fighting Terrorism", 2

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid, 14

⁴⁴⁶ Ibid

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid

⁴⁴⁸ Ibid

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid, 14

⁴⁵⁰ Motley, *US Strategy to Counter Domestic Political Terrorism*, 21

intent, and not the ideology, of the suspect to ascertain whether the actions amount to domestic terrorism.⁴⁵¹ No consideration need be made of the manner of attack nor the target. The statute should incorporate the intent to intimidate or coerce a civilian population.⁴⁵² An example of this is The Protect Georgia Act. The Act, that became effective on July 1, 2017, defined the offense of domestic terrorism in the State of Georgia.⁴⁵³ It establishes that a person must have the “intent to intimidate the public or coerce the government while causing significant harm in order to be liable for domestic terrorism.”⁴⁵⁴ The Georgia statute also requires that the person have the intent to “either kill or cause serious bodily harm to an individual or group of individuals or to disable or destroy critical infrastructure, a state or government facility, or a public transportation system.”⁴⁵⁵

Georgia ensures the law is enforceable by outlining the minimum and maximum sentences for various levels of relevant harm, inflicted or intended. Domestic terrorism resulting in death are punishable by life in prison, life without parole, or the death penalty.⁴⁵⁶ Kidnapping or serious bodily harm carries a punishment of by fifteen to thirty-five years imprisonment.⁴⁵⁷ The Act also spells out in section 16-11-224 that “this...shall not be construed to infringe upon constitutionally protected speech or assembly.”⁴⁵⁸ There are concerns that the government would use a law of this magnitude

⁴⁵¹ Carpenter, "The Ad Hoc Federal Crime of Terrorism", 410-411

⁴⁵² Ibid, 412

⁴⁵³ John J. Crowley & Tatiana E. Posada, *HB 452 - Domestic Terrorism*, 34 Ga. St. U. L. Rev. 17 (2018), 18

⁴⁵⁴ Ibid

⁴⁵⁵ Ibid, 27

⁴⁵⁶ Crowley, *HB 452 - Domestic Terrorism*, 28

⁴⁵⁷ Ibid

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid

to target lawful protests and the Georgia statute appears to have legislated into The Act that The Act does not serve such purposes.

Thirty-three other states and Washington D.C. also have state terrorism or domestic terrorism laws.⁴⁵⁹ Eight of those states prohibit providing support, either material or financial, to terrorists.⁴⁶⁰ Two state laws, both Michigan and Kentucky, allow for life sentences for anyone convicted of terrorism.⁴⁶¹ Under Alabama law, if there is any loss of life while committing an act of terrorism, “the sentence upon conviction of the offense shall be death.”⁴⁶²

This does not completely dismiss the need to understand ideology. Understanding ideology may help with preventing and deradicalization. However, a right wing terrorist blowing up a building is equivalent on all levels to a left wing terrorist, special interest terrorist, or lone wolf terrorist committing the same offense. Timothy McVeigh, Weather Underground, ALF, and Theodore Kaczynski had different ideologies but the shared commonality was the belief that using violence to achieve those ideological ends was necessary.

⁴⁵⁹ Margot Williams and Trevor Aaronson, "How Individual States Have Criminalized Terrorism," The Intercept, March 23, 2019

⁴⁶⁰ Williams, "How Individual States Have Criminalized Terrorism"

⁴⁶¹ Ibid

⁴⁶² "2017 Code of Alabama :: Title 13A - CRIMINAL CODE. :: Chapter 10 - OFFENSES AGAINST PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION. :: Article 7 - The Anti-Terrorism Act of 2002. :: Section 13A-10-152 - Crime of Terrorism.," Justia Law

Conclusion

In spite of the existing focus on international terrorism, it is paramount that the nation remains conscious of the domestic terrorism threat that America faces. During the last 50 years, there have been wide-ranging developments in domestic terrorism and a fundamental shift in the dominant ideology occurred. A populace as diverse and intricate as the United States of America should anticipate conflicting issues, principles, and philosophies arising among the population. This holds true to a greater extent for those who believe radical measures to be the only way to express their ideas and attitudes or find a genuine remedy to their grievances.

This thesis focused on two key areas in domestic terrorism that are on the rise and sought to increase awareness of what is driving domestic extremists to resort to violence. This thesis highlighted the particular danger of lone wolf terrorists as a special category meriting further attention. It also focused on what the government should do about it. In addition, a large part of this thesis focused on variants of right wing terrorism, which have become more prevalent, due to shifts in the culture and politics. For example, intensified concerns about increased regulations of firearms, disheartened combat veterans struggling to reintegrate into society, an unstable economy, and xenophobic rhetoric on full display have given rise to white supremacists, militia movements, and those who espouse the anti-government agenda. Presently, the largest threat of domestic terrorism in the United States are right-wing extremists. Sovereign citizens, who respect no form of law enforcement, combined with the unpredictability of lone wolf sympathizers make this group even more dangerous. In contrast, left-wing extremism seems to have peaked between the 1960s and 1980s. The revolutionary excitement

exhausted its momentum when the increase in violence of the various extremist groups led to a lack of populist support. As stated earlier, it would be ill advised and imprudent to ignore the remnants of the leftist movement as there has been more activity in recent years on this front. An example of a group with left-wing ideology is the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement. Similar to SDS, the group espouses social change through peaceful discourse. However, if that change is slow to occur there is potential for a fringe element of BLM, a la The Weather Underground in the SDS, to incorporate violence as a means to bring more attention to the cause. Social conditions and growing economic inequality are impactful on this community as well.

Bombings, arson, and sabotage are the calling cards of special-interest violent extremists. Beginning in the 1980s, these single-issue extremists have continued to trend in the direction of violence to pursue their objectives. ALF and ELF have avoided major criminal cases because of their leaderless structure. Anti-abortion extremists have progressed from destroying clinics to attacks on abortion facility workers. These singularly focused fanatics refuse to wait for the courts or legislatures to fix these perceived problems and are doing it violently themselves. The last, and possibly the greatest threat in the near future, is the lone wolf actor, and this work has spent some time focusing on the motives and methods of this dangerous threat. Not beholden to any specific group or ideology, the lone wolf is harder to detect before an attack and capture after one. They execute planned and unplanned attacks with weapons ranging from guns and bombs, to planes and biological weapons. The threat of the lone wolf extremist is real and has increased over the last 50 years. There may be a trend developing that moves

away from organized extremist groups to the lone actor that is worthy of in-depth scrutiny.

Moving forward, the country will confront significant difficulties with domestic terrorism. Regardless of the category, the ideological-based motivations that drive violent extremist groups to resort to domestic terrorism are rights to which they believe they are entitled, jobs they feel they should have, money that perceive they have a right to, and a quality of living that another group is supposedly denying them access to. Ultimately, to protect and preserve the security of the nation from an evolving threat, the United States must continue to identify Americans who espouse ideological motivations that would justify their doing harm to other Americans. The next step in the process must be identifying and defeating the radicalization process. What are the techniques and procedures used in the radicalization of domestic extremists in America and how can the United States prevent radicalization?

This thesis established that political discourse is divergent and can at times be extremely volatile in the United States. Certain members of American society have taken that discourse to the extreme. They attempt to either solve their problems, create problems for others, or communicate their political agenda using violence. In modern America, the most prevalent domestic terrorism faction is right-wing extremist. They blame the government, women, minorities, and immigrants for taking their jobs and homes, and eroding the identity of white male privilege. There is documented growth since 2008 and their platform to enter the mainstream solidified since the 2016 presidential campaign and election.

A large part of this work focused on eco-terrorism, which has remained a consistent threat since emerging in the 1980s. Eco-terrorists blamed the government for doing little or nothing, in the mind of those seeking to save the planet from humans, and these eco-terrorists have turned to violence. The anti-abortionist extremist threat is similar to eco-terrorist. Singularly focused, these ideologues have committed bombings, shootings, and other forms of violence for over 30 years. In the absence of Rudolph, others who are not content to accept the Supreme Court ruling that legalized abortion have stepped into the fray to commit murder in the defense of the unborn. The growing threat is that of the lone-wolf actor. They are harder to stop before an attack and harder to capture after. Lone wolves, ideologically driven from across the political spectrum, derive passive influence and inspiration from groups that are frustrated and contentious with the government.

Terrorism is the intentional and meticulous attack on civilians to arouse terror for political objectives and the United States must make it clear to everyone, not only in words but also in deeds, that it has the political fortitude, determination, and capacity to fight terrorism.⁴⁶³ The threat of domestic terrorism presents a real and present danger. This has existed since the beginning of the nation and continues today. The only thing greater than the threat of domestic terrorism, or terrorism of any kind, is “the threat of ignorance or apathy concerning the problem.”⁴⁶⁴ Focus has shifted from domestic terrorism. It is apparent in the lack of an enforceable statute and in the allocation of counterterrorism resources.

⁴⁶³ Netanyahu, *Fighting Terrorism*, 8

⁴⁶⁴ Motley, *US Strategy to Counter Domestic Political Terrorism*, 24

Dylann Roof's crimes fit the statutory definition of domestic terrorism. A jury convicted him of federal hate crimes and sentenced to death. This appears to be a win and, on some levels, it is. On the other hand, the ideology that drove his radicalization is unaffected if the perpetrator is not labeled a terrorist. If simply punishing the culprit with prison or death is sufficient, why not call the 9/11 attackers murderers instead of terrorists? Why label those who commit "international terrorism" as terrorist and not by the specific crime they committed: arson, murder, destruction of private property. Because the attacks are felt across the entire nation. Those hijackers attacked everything that America stands for on that day and the impact remains nearly 18 years later.

Such is the case for Roof's attack on the foundation of the African-American community – the church. He attacked everything that the Black community stands for and the impact remains. John Allen Muhammad and Lee Boyd Malvo terrorized Maryland, Virginia, and Washington, D.C. for three weeks. Residents altered their daily lives for fear of sniper attacks. Virginia has a terrorism statute that allowed the Commonwealth to show the people that it would punish terrorism with the harshest penalty available.

Ideology aside, the cases have exemplified that the crimes committed by these violent extremists fit the statutory definition of domestic terrorism. Their actions, while ideologically driven, are not ideologically dependent. Therefore, in order for the statute to encompass all forms of domestic terrorism, method and target immaterial, it must be ideological indifferent. As the Georgia and Virginia laws display, there is a way to legislate, charge, try, and convict those who would commit these offenses regardless of ideology. However, a federal statute that effectively and adequately defines domestic terrorism creates a uniform standard for all fifty states and Washington, D.C. to emulate.

As it is, there are numerous definitions across thirty-four states. Sixteen states have no definition because they have no law. A streamlined statute promotes effective information sharing. All agencies, federal, state, local, and tribal, are considering the same factors when preventing or prosecuting domestic terrorism based on the federal law.

Further consideration. Moving forward, a major concern should be the Anti-fascist (ANTIFA) movement that is growing in the United States. ANTIFA has surfaced in an effort to counter the nationalism agenda that Trump's rhetoric champions. They are a mixture of diverse groups and individuals who actively, forcefully resist the far right movements.⁴⁶⁵ Their ideology is entrenched in the notion that the Nazis came to power because people did not resist.⁴⁶⁶ Since the 2016 presidential election, people who were politically more conventional than the typical anarchist have joined ANTIFA's numbers.⁴⁶⁷ Between 2017 and 2018, there were no less than 15 incidents across the country involving ANTIFA. On college campuses such as Michigan State University and University of California, Berkeley and in New York City and Portland, Oregon, ANTIFA counter-protesters clashed with right wing white supremacist groups League of the South, Rise Above Movement, Traditionalist Worker Party, and Oath Keepers.⁴⁶⁸

While they are anti-Trump, ANTIFA is also anti-government. They do not want the government to help because they want to beat back the nationalist and white supremacist themselves. This movement could easily grow into a better-organized 21st century, technologically enhanced new extreme left. A predictive conclusion is that if

⁴⁶⁵ "Who Are the Antifa?" Anti-Defamation League

⁴⁶⁶ Ibid

⁴⁶⁷ Ibid

⁴⁶⁸ "Weekend Clashes Emblematic of Political Violence Around the Country," Anti-Defamation League

certain factors align, the Republicans regain control of Congress in 2022 and Trump wins a second term, the growth of ANTIFA could match or even surpass that of right-wing extremist during the Obama presidency. The autonomous nature of the leaderless ANTIFA movement may move more in the direction of the Sovereign Citizens Movement than traditionally structured white supremacists groups or the Weather Underground.

The National Strategy for Counterterrorism of the United States of America, an Executive Branch document dated October 2018, appears to run counter to the current practices of the Department of Justice and the FBI. The document, outlining ways to modernize and integrate tools and authorities to counter terrorism, addresses investigating links between non-Islamic domestic terrorists and their foreign collaborators.⁴⁶⁹ If the government is able to charge Muslim or Islamic homegrown terrorist under the international terrorism statute because of the affiliation with a foreign ideology, why are white supremacist who have links to Neo Nazis and Skinhead organizations, both European based ideologies, not charged in a similar manner. “Terrorism in the United States is a domestic problem with international roots.”⁴⁷⁰

Should the United States establish an autonomous domestic intelligence agency similar to the United States State Bureau of Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism or the United Kingdom’s MI-5? This agency would be separate from the Federal Bureau of Investigation and have no law enforcement role, but would serve as the stateside version of the Central Intelligence Agency, taking a leading role in developing

⁴⁶⁹ "For Counterterrorism - Whitehouse.gov," www.whitehouse.gov, October 2018, 18

⁴⁷⁰ Motley, *US Strategy to Counter Domestic Political Terrorism*, 24

coordinated strategies and approaches to defeat domestic terrorism and securing the counterterrorism cooperation of federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies.

The function of Britain's MI5, officially known as The Security Service ... is "the protection of national security and in particular its protection against threats such as terrorism, espionage and sabotage, the activities of agents of foreign powers, and from actions intended to overthrow or undermine parliamentary democracy by political, industrial or violent means".⁴⁷¹ MI5 seeks to find and prevent those who are trying to pass sensitive information and equipment to foreign powers.⁴⁷² They disrupt the acts of foreign intelligence officers that are detrimental to Britain's interests.⁴⁷³ MI5 works the Secret Intelligence Service (Britain's Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) equivalent), Government Communications Headquarters (equivalent to America's National Security Agency), departments of government, and friendly foreign security and intelligence organizations.⁴⁷⁴ MI5 also works with police as appropriate as The Security Service, similar to the CIA, has no police powers.

An internal intelligence and counterintelligence agency that operates within the borders of the United States, and externally as necessary, would limit the function of the FBI to acting on the intelligence provided without conflict with any other law enforcement priorities. This would leave the new internal intelligence agency to investigating threats to the homeland, both foreign and domestic. House and staff this

⁴⁷¹ "What We Do." MI5 Security Service. Accessed August 10, 2019

⁴⁷² Ibid

⁴⁷³ Ibid

⁴⁷⁴ "Partnerships: MI5 - The Security Service." MI5 Security Service

new agency under the Department of the Homeland Security, separate from any other intelligence or law enforcement agency.

Proposed Terrorism Law

Terrorism offense

1. A person is guilty of a crime of terrorism when, with intent to intimidate or coerce a civilian population, influence the policy of a unit of government by intimidation or coercion, or affect the conduct of a unit of government by murder, assassination or kidnapping, he or she commits a specified offense.⁴⁷⁵

(A) Specified offense includes when:

- (1) A person who commits first-degree murder that constitutes an act of terrorism,
- (2) A person who commits murder of a law enforcement officer or public safety employee that constitutes an act of terrorism,
- (3) A person who commits murder in the second degree that constitutes an act of terrorism,
- (4) A person who commits manslaughter that constitutes an act of terrorism,
- (5) A person who commits kidnapping that constitutes an act of terrorism,
- (6) A person who commits any assault with intent to kill that constitutes an act of terrorism,

⁴⁷⁵ “2017 New York Laws :: PEN - Penal :: Part 4 - Administrative Provisions :: Title Y-1 - Enacted Without Title Heading. :: Article 490 - Terrorism :: 490.20 - Making a Terroristic Threat.” Justia Law

- (7) A person who commits mayhem or maliciously disfiguring another that constitutes an act of terrorism,
- (8) A person who commits arson that constitutes an act of terrorism,
- (9) A person who attempts or conspires to commit first degree murder, murder of a law enforcement officer or public safety employee, murder in the second degree, manslaughter, or kidnapping that constitutes an act of terrorism,
- (10) A person who attempts or conspires to commit any assault with intent to kill that constitutes an act of terrorism,
- (11) A person who provides material support or resources for an act of terrorism, or
- (12) A person who solicits material support or resources to commit an act of terrorism.⁴⁷⁶

2. A person who, without lawful authority, possesses, uses, threatens, or attempts or conspires to possess or use a weapon of mass destruction in furtherance of an act of terrorism is guilty of a crime of terrorism.⁴⁷⁷

⁴⁷⁶ “2017 District of Columbia Code: Title 22 - Criminal Offenses and Penalties: Chapter 31B - Terrorism: § 22-3153. Acts of Terrorism; Penalties.” Justia Law

⁴⁷⁷ “2017 South Carolina Code of Laws :: Title 16 - Crimes and Offenses :: CHAPTER 23 - OFFENSES INVOLVING WEAPONS :: Section 16-23-715. Possession, Threatened or Attempted Use of Weapon of Mass Destruction for Act of Terrorism; Penalty.” Justia Law

Terroristic threat

1. A person is guilty of making a terroristic threat when, with intent to intimidate or coerce a civilian population, influence the policy of a unit of government by intimidation or coercion, or affect the conduct of a unit of government by murder, assassination or kidnapping, he or she threatens to commit or cause to be committed a specified offense and thereby causes a reasonable expectation or fear of the imminent commission of such offense.⁴⁷⁸

(A) Specified offenses listed in 1(A) (1) thru (12)

2. It shall be no defense to a prosecution pursuant to this section that the defendant did not have the intent or capability of committing the specified offense or that the threat was not made to a person who was a subject thereof.⁴⁷⁹

Nothing in this statute shall be interpreted to prevent lawful assembly and peaceful and orderly petition for the redress of grievances.⁴⁸⁰ Specific ideology, political affiliation, or association with any group shall be interpreted as a crime of terrorism or intent to commit a crime of terrorism.

⁴⁷⁸ “2017 New York Laws”

⁴⁷⁹ Ibid

⁴⁸⁰ “2017 Louisiana Laws: Revised Statutes: TITLE 14 - Criminal Law: RS 14:128.1 - Terrorism.” Justia Law

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Curriculum Vita

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